

# jazz/nba season preview

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# Star search

In a league driven by big superstars, will the Jazz's team-first approach pay off with a long-awaited playoff berth?



## In-depth league and team analysis

- LeBron James and the Cavaliers return as champs
- The star-studded Warriors get even stronger
- Eastern and Western Conference power rankings
- Individual team previews with rosters and statistics



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## Gordon Hayward

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-8, 220

**AGE, YEAR:** 26, 7th

**POSITION:** Forward

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** Hayward is one of the best all-around small forwards in the NBA, and has averaged over 19 points and 5 rebounds per game the past two seasons. He can score from the perimeter, and his added strength allows him to get into the lane and finish at the rim. Hayward was Utah's best player in preseason before injury.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** For this team to reach its ceiling, Hayward has to be an All-Star caliber player. Hayward is good enough to average 20 points, 5 rebounds and 5 assists per game. Those guys are coveted in the NBA, and the Jazz have one — and he's a plus defender in addition to his offensive versatility.



## Derrick Favors

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-10, 265

**AGE, YEAR:** 25, 7th

**POSITION:** Forward

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** Favors is one of the better two-way power forwards in the NBA, one who has averaged over 16 points and 8 rebounds per game the past two seasons while defending at a high level. He can hit from the perimeter, or pound inside for buckets. His versatility at power forward and center is one of his best traits.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Favors needs to stay healthy, and challenge himself to average a double-double for the season and continue improving his free throw percentage like he has in his career. He's certainly capable. Few power forwards are as naturally talented as Favors is. He has to be a rock for Utah offensively in the post.



## Rudy Gobert

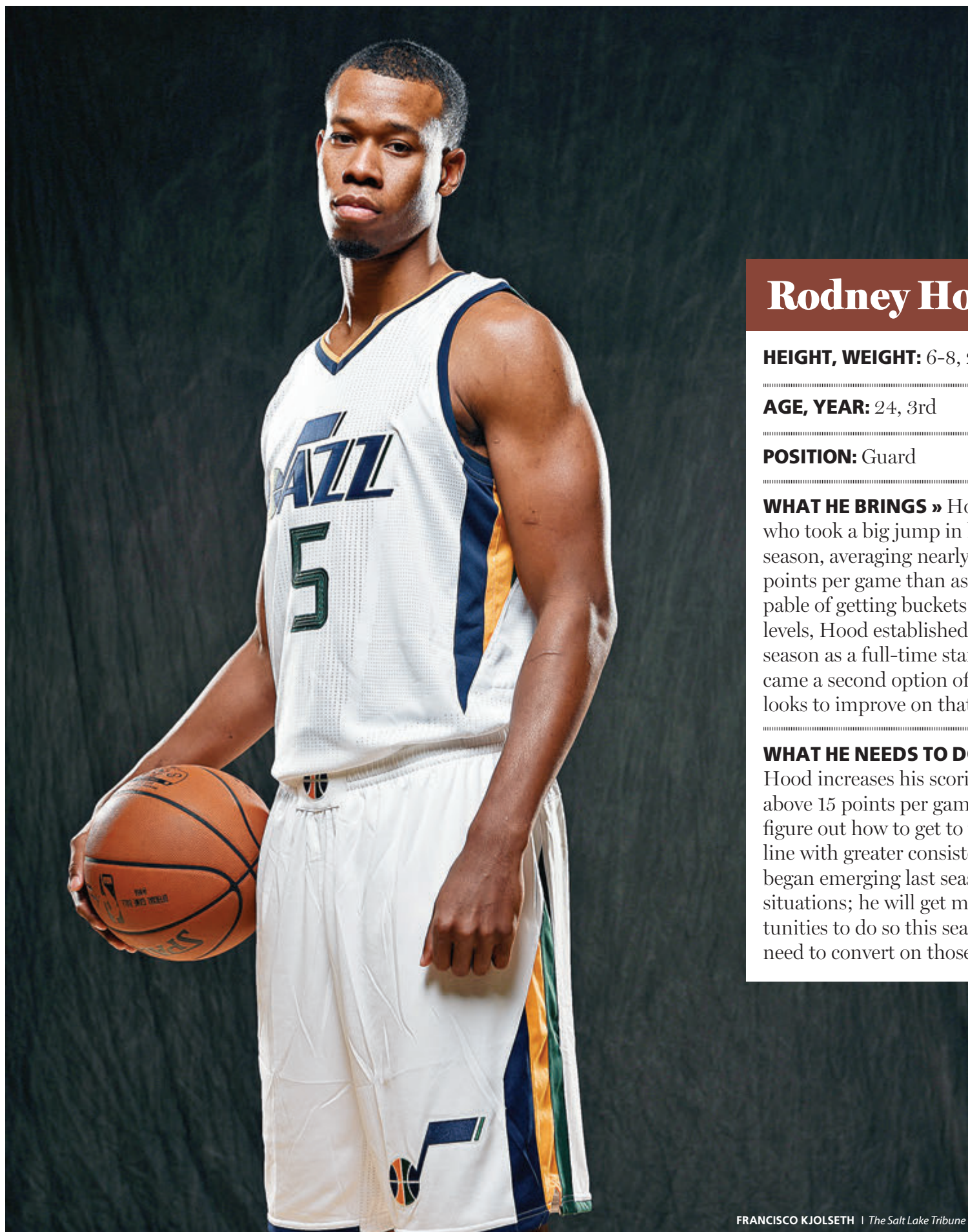
**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 7-1, 245

**AGE, YEAR:** 24, 4th

**POSITION:** Center

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** Gobert is as unique as he is tall. The big man is one of the best rebounders and shot-blockers in the league. He's averaged over two blocked shots per game each of the past two seasons, and is versatile enough to guard on the perimeter. The Jazz are a great team defensively when he's on the floor.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Gobert needs to stay healthy, make free throws, catch passes and finish at the basket. Sounds simple, but it isn't. Shoddy free-throw shooting caused Quin Snyder to sit him in situations last season. Gobert seems to have made some strides there. He looks to be on the verge of a good season.



## Rodney Hood

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-8, 206

**AGE, YEAR:** 24, 3rd

**POSITION:** Guard

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** Hood is a scorer who took a big jump in his second season, averaging nearly six more points per game than as a rookie. Capable of getting buckets from all three levels, Hood established himself last season as a full-time starter. He became a second option offensively, and looks to improve on that this season.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Ideally, Hood increases his scoring average above 15 points per game. He needs to figure out how to get to the free-throw line with greater consistency. Hood began emerging last season in clutch situations; he will get more opportunities to do so this season and will need to convert on those.



## George Hill

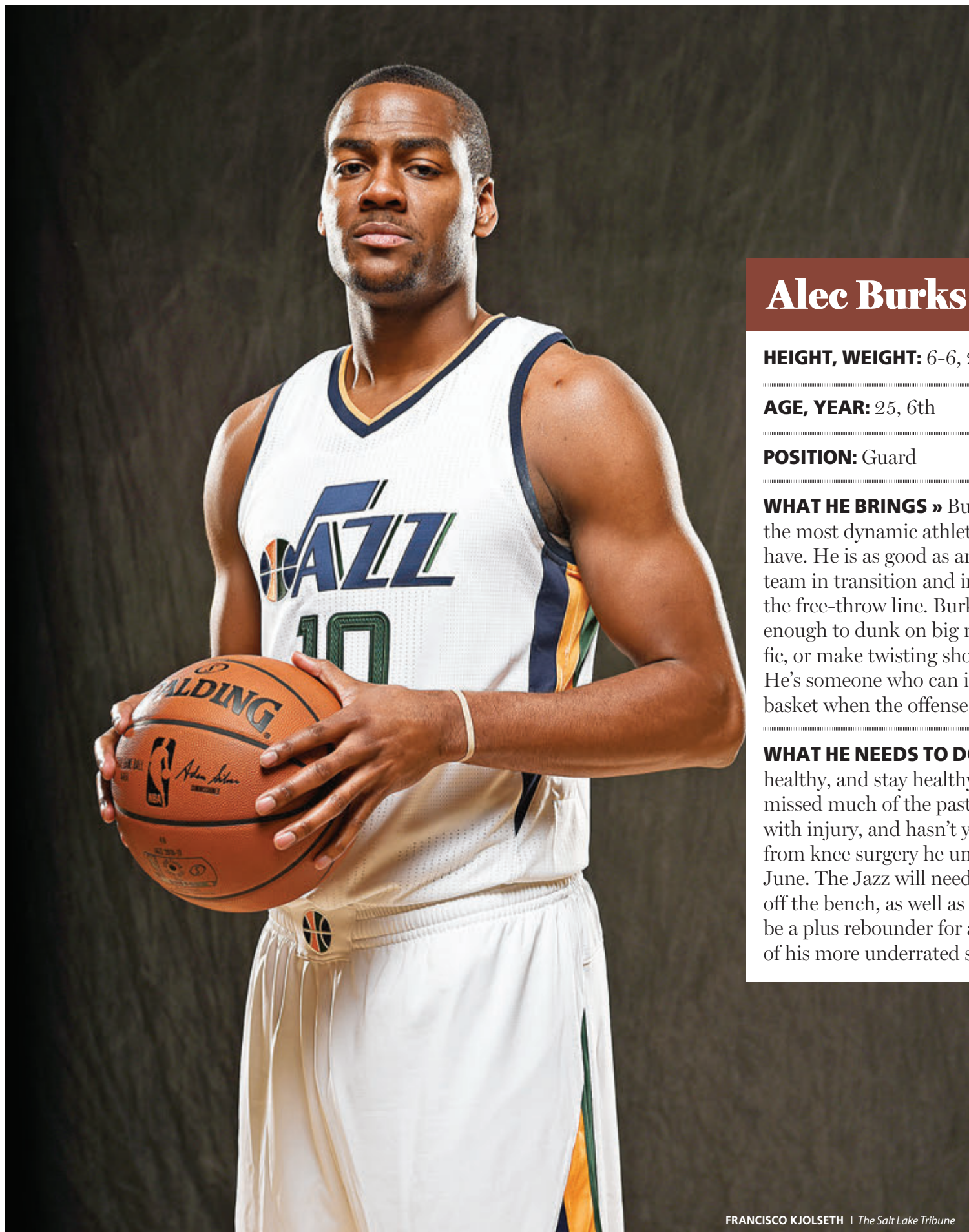
**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-3, 188

**AGE, YEAR:** 30, 9th

**POSITION:** Guard

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** Hill is one of the most underrated point guards in the NBA, capable of defending and shooting at a high level. He will serve as a floor-spacer for Gordon Hayward and Rodney Hood, and a mentor for Danté Exum. Hill helps the Jazz win games instantly with his knowledge of the league.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Hill will need to be more aggressive offensively early in the season with Gordon Hayward's absence due to injury. When Hayward returns, Hill needs to run the offense, lead the defense, be a coach on the floor. He needs to be the glue that will make it all work if the Jazz are to make the playoffs.



## Alec Burks

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-6, 214

**AGE, YEAR:** 25, 6th

**POSITION:** Guard

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** Burks could be the most dynamic athlete the Jazz have. He is as good as anyone on the team in transition and in getting to the free-throw line. Burks is explosive enough to dunk on big men in traffic, or make twisting shots at the rim. He's someone who can improvise for a basket when the offense breaks down.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Get healthy, and stay healthy. Burks has missed much of the past two seasons with injury, and hasn't yet recovered from knee surgery he underwent in June. The Jazz will need his scoring off the bench, as well as his ability to be a plus rebounder for a guard, one of his more underrated skills.





## Boris Diaw

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-8, 250

**AGE, YEAR:** 34, 14th

**POSITION:** Forward

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** A skilled and cerebral big man, Diaw is a master at angles, and leveraging his weight and post game to score buckets. He also has a wonderful handle for a big man, and is a good shooter and passer. His minutes will come at both power forward and center. He will be a mentor to Trey Lyles and Rudy Gobert.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Diaw's love of fine dining and espresso is well known. But if he can stay in good shape, he's so skilled and such a smart player that he can make an impact for the Jazz. Diaw is well-suited for Utah's offense, with his ability to post up or play facing the basket as a big man with significant versatility.



## Danté Exum

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-6, 190

**AGE, YEAR:** 21, 2nd

**POSITION:** Guard

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** As a pure talent, Exum is dynamic, and has the ceiling to develop into an All-Star at some point in his career. Exum is 6-foot-6, athletic, has a good feel and a terrific first step. He's also young, callow, and coming off a significant ACL injury. Still, he projects to help this team, whether off the bench or starting.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Exum is a terrific defender. From that point, he needs to learn what he can from George Hill and Shelvin Mack. Exum needs to continue developing his overall skill set and stay healthy. He will play both guard positions for the Jazz and be a huge key to Utah's playoff hopes.



## Joe Johnson

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-7, 240

**AGE, YEAR:** 35, 16th

**POSITION:** Forward

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** 'Iso Joe' can score. And score. And score some more. He was brought to Utah to be a sixth man, and that's the ideal role for him at this stage of his career. Johnson is one of the better clutch players in the league, and you can bet he will get chances to prove that throughout the season.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Johnson can show the youngsters how to get it done in the last five minutes of games. The Jazz lost a lot of close games last season, and Johnson will help remedy that. He will get a lot of chances to contribute off the bench, and could be in a starting role as Gordon Hayward sits out with an injury.



## Trey Lyles

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-10, 234

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**AGE, YEAR:** 20, 2nd

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**POSITION:** Forward

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**WHAT HE BRINGS »** Like Danté Exum, Lyles is an extremely young, dynamic talent who oozes potential. At 6-foot-10, Lyles handles and shoots the ball like a guard. He's capable of making plays off the dribble. He can score in bunches, and he provides a very nice contrast in the frontcourt to Derrick Favors and Rudy Gobert.

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**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Lyles' ultimate role is to provide scoring off the bench. As the season goes along, he could prove to be difficult to keep off the floor. Lyles has the talent and unique skill to be a major contributor on this team. Improving defensively is the fastest way for him to get the minutes needed to make an impact.



## Joe Ingles

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-8, 226

**AGE, YEAR:** 29, 3rd

**POSITION:** Forward

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** ‘Slo mo’ is an accurate description of Ingles’ game — and also a huge compliment to his skill. Ingles is one of those guys who plays at his own pace, and can’t be sped up by the opposition. He’s a superior passer and thinker on the floor. He often does little things that go unnoticed.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Ingles is a rotation talent, but could find it tough to garner minutes. He’s OK with that, as his main objective is to win games. Ingles is also one of the funniest guys on the team in the locker room, always good for a joke or a wise crack. On and off the floor, he’s proven valuable to the Jazz’s chemistry.



## Shelvin Mack

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-2, 204

**AGE, YEAR:** 26, 6th

**POSITION:** Guard

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** Mack is another veteran point guard who is capable of getting into the lane off the dribble. He knows angles, knows how to score, and also defends at a high level. Frankly, Mack is overqualified to be a third point guard in this league. But that's what he projects to be when the roster is at full strength.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** If Mack isn't playing minutes, he still needs to be a leader and mentor for the younger guys. Minutes may not be an issue early on, as the Jazz are dealing with injuries. When Mack has played this preseason, he's been good almost every time. He needs to continue that trend, because he will be needed.



## Raul Neto

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-1, 179

**AGE, YEAR:** 24, 2nd

**POSITION:** Guard

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** It's hard to believe Neto will be the fourth point guard on this team. He's skilled and tough on the perimeter, and a good defender and improving shooter. Neto probably will spend at least some of the season in the D-League. But if the injury bug eats into the point guard depth, Neto is good enough to step in.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** It may take a year, but it's almost a certainty the Jazz won't have four point guards on their team next season at this time. For this season at least, Neto will focus on being a good teammate, supporting the group and staying ready for any opportunities, whether with the Jazz or in the D-League.



## Jeff Withey

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 7-0, 231

**AGE, YEAR:** 26, 4th

**POSITION:** Center

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** A guy at the end of the roster needs to bring a significant skill, and Withey's skill is shot-blocking and protecting the rim. He's also athletic and pretty fearless. Withey gave good minutes last season when Favors and Gobert missed time with injuries. His defense will keep him around.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Like a few guys on the roster, he needs to stay ready. That's exactly what he did last year, and he proved his worth in a big way during the middle of the season. If nothing else, the Jazz know they can count on him to step in, if needed. For someone in Withey's position, that's a valuable trait.





## Joel Bolomboy

**HEIGHT, WEIGHT:** 6-9, 235

**AGE, YEAR:** 22, 1st

**POSITION:** Center

**WHAT HE BRINGS »** The rookie from Weber State is super athletic, but also raw. He plays hard, rebounds the ball, soaks up instruction and works hard. The Jazz took a liking to his work ethic from the moment they drafted him, which explains why they gave him a contract with a significant amount of guaranteed dollars.

**WHAT HE NEEDS TO DO »** Take this year to learn as much as he can about the NBA game. Bolomboy won't see much meaningful time on the floor this season, and will probably go back and forth to the D-League. But the Jazz drafted him and kept him around for a reason. They like his potential and upside.

## Can a team be the star?



STEVE GRIFFIN | Tribune file photo

Gordon Hayward battles Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James for a rebound during a game in 2014. James is coming off the third NBA title of his career.

By **TONY JONES**

*The Salt Lake Tribune*

The alpha world of today's NBA isn't exactly supportive of the roster put together by the Utah Jazz.

Sure, the Jazz have a good team. Each player in their healthy starting five, if you believe the offseason chatter, ranks somewhere in the top 100 players in the league. The second unit looks plentiful with talent and veteran

leadership. If the preseason tells us anything, the defense has a chance to be very good. Gordon Hayward, before he broke his finger, looked bound for an All-Star level year.

Yes, the Jazz are good. And deep. But those two attributes don't typically equate to deep playoff runs in the NBA, which is what everyone plays for.

LeBron James. Kobe Bryant. Kevin Garnett. Tim Duncan. Dwyane Wade. Stephen

**Jazz have a deep and talented roster, but in today's NBA, it usually requires a megastar to win it all.**

Curry. These names ring a bell? They are all NBA superstars who have led their teams to championships. If you haven't had one of these guys on your team, your team has a ceiling. It's a fact that leads to a question: Can a roster with a bunch of good players win a title in today's superstar-driven climate?

"Well, Golden State has the strength in numbers, and they have the superstars," Jazz coach Quin Snyder said. "We

don't have the catchphrase superstar, but being a unit whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts is important. This is who we were last year, and we had a bunch of injuries. But we had different guys step up, and guys are going to get that opportunity for us this year."

There have been some very good teams lacking superstars that have climbed high up the postseason ladder:

*Please see STAR ON PAGE 19*

## Star

» Continued from 18

» The 2000 Portland Trail Blazers were able to advance to the Western Conference Finals, and had a fourth quarter double-digit lead on Bryant, Shaquille O'Neal and the Los Angeles Lakers in Game 7 before an epic collapse. Rashheed Wallace was the best player on that team. But those Blazers went 12 deep and were exceptional defensively. Had they beaten those Lakers, they probably would have been favored to win it all.

» The 2015 Atlanta Hawks featured four All-Stars, won 60 games during the regular season, and advanced to the Eastern Conference Finals. There, they ran into James and the Cavs, and lost in a sweep. Still, they proved how a team without a superstar can win in this climate — good ball movement, good shooting and excellent defense.

» In 2004, the Detroit Pistons became the gold standard for the 'Team is the Star' — sorry Real Salt Lake — approach. The Pistons turned a suffocating defense, terrific coaching and timely shooting into an NBA championship. It helped that they faced a Lakers team in the finals that became unglued by Kobe and Shaq's constant in-fighting. But those Pistons were a special group, led by Larry Brown, and they polished off L.A. in five games.

"When I was there, it was like we were hungry," said former Jazzman Mehmet Okur, who played on that Detroit title team. "There were no superstars, but our chemistry was there. Believe it or not, we used to hang out off the floor a lot. Every day. Go eat, watch football, go to games, whatever the case was. I think I see that with the Jazz."

Former NBA star and head coach Kevin McHale said most teams play a lot of close games that can determine a team's destiny over the course of an 82-game schedule. And that's where Utah's offseason comes squarely into focus. The Jazz played 26 games last season that were one-point contests in the final minute. They won just nine of them, which went a long

way toward keeping Utah out of the playoffs.

"Unless you are the Golden State Warriors, you're going to be playing a lot of close games. That's just how the league works," McHale said. "The question with the Jazz is can they win those close games? That's going to go a long way toward determining their destiny."

Jazz general manager Dennis Lindsey brought George Hill, Joe Johnson and Boris Diaw into the fray during the offseason to complement the Jazz's young roster and turn that record in close games around. Lindsey knows the Warriors are the one team who won't play a lot of close games this season, especially now that they've added another superstar in Kevin Durant.

Hill thinks the Jazz can be a serious contender without a marquee name.

"Those Atlanta Hawks had a lot of good players," he said. "They ended up having a lot of all-stars. We have a makeup where people may not know a lot of our guys, but maybe it's better to fly under the radar, where people least expect us to win, but then we do it. We have a lot of talent on our team."

Hayward could eventually prove to be the exception to the Jazz's no-superstar makeup. Before injuring his finger last week, the small forward had been playing great basketball during the preseason, scoring with ease, filling up the boxscore. He had gained muscle and put in extra skill work during the summer, and it showed.

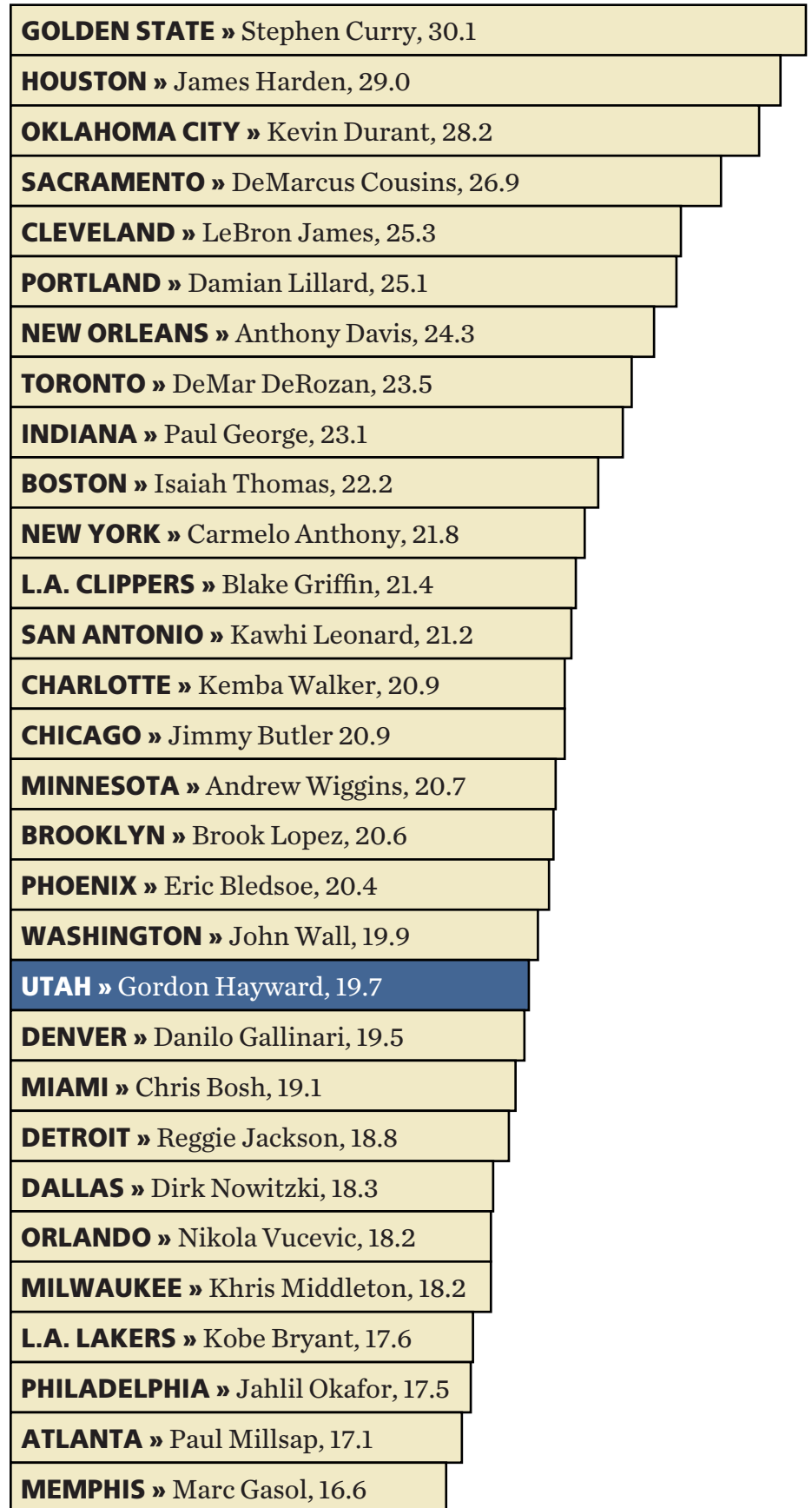
Hayward hasn't made an all-star team. But last season he averaged 19 points per game and was one of the better two-way players in the league. Many around the league think he can improve on those numbers.

"I really like him," Los Angeles Clippers coach Doc Rivers said. "I do think he's a star. I think it's been a heavy load for him. I coached Tracy McGrady in Orlando that one year and Grant Hill got hurt. You realize when there's one guy, that's a heavy load. The more players Utah keeps adding, the better Gordon will get."

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## The leading scorer for every NBA team, ranked

Out of 32 teams, only 10 last season had a leading scorer whose points per game average was lower than Gordon Hayward's was for Utah. Of those 10, only five teams made the playoffs, and only two (Atlanta, Miami) advanced past the first round.



## Time share an issue for Snyder



FILE PHOTOS | The Salt Lake Tribune

Former rotation regulars who could have their minutes drop this season are, from left: Raul Neto, Joe Ingles, Shelvin Mack and Jeff Withey.

By **TONY JONES**

The Salt Lake Tribune

### Head coach can utilize bench depth he's not had before.

The Jazz's depth this season may be the team's biggest strength. It's likely coach Quin Snyder will no longer have to sweat the injuries, nicks and bruises that can occur over an 82-game regular season. His options seem almost limitless on paper, which means a team that struggled many times off the bench last year may now sport one of the best second units in the NBA.

The added depth — bolstered by the acquisitions of veterans George Hill, Boris Diaw and Joe Johnson — has potential. It may also be the biggest internal challenge the Jazz face this season.

One can make the argument that there might be too much depth. While the Jazz's lineup options are plentiful, the minutes and shots aren't.

As such, internal chemistry could determine the fate of this Jazz team as much as anything that might happen on the floor.

"We all have to see past that and be on the same page," Diaw said. "We have to understand, no matter what, that the end game is to win. Of course, sometimes guys have their own agendas and

contracts to worry about. But at the end, the most important thing is to win games."

Utah's depth is unique. To put it into context, the Jazz' projected fourth point guard — Raul Neto — spent much of last season in the starting lineup. Joe Ingles projects as the fifth wing — fifth wings don't typically play many minutes, yet he's been a rotation regular for the past two years.

Jeff Withey, who will probably be either the 14th or 15th man on the roster, saw a lot of playing time last year. Johnson, a seven time all-star, has started every game he's played since the 2004-2005 season, but probably won't be a starter on this team.

In sum, 14 Jazz players — either here or elsewhere — saw major rotation minutes the last time they stepped on an NBA floor. Regular NBA rotations typically run nine deep — sometimes, a coach can manufacture consistent minutes for 10. If one does the math, it could be a challenge for Snyder to keep everyone happy.

"To some degree, there's been too much of a fixation on minutes," Snyder said.

"It's relevant, but developing the roster is going to take time. I don't think we're going to have a goal of going into Christmas knowing who our starting quarterback is going to be, if you know what I mean. There will be adjustments over the course of the season, there will be different matchups."

Having said that, Snyder acknowledges that sometimes players are going to have to be "happy for the group." He also knows that developing internal chemistry while determining his rotation — even if he tinkers like a mad scientist for a few months — will be one of the biggest challenges.

Over the course of training camp this past week, Snyder has done some subtle things geared at catering to his new roster. He's having his team play at a faster pace than last year. He's mixing and matching lineups during scrimmage sessions, and continues to stress winning as the most important thing for the upcoming season.

"We added so much depth, that getting guys involved and becoming compatible is going to be very important to us," Jazz forward Trey Lyles said.

There are lots of reasons for everybody to pitch in and make it work, but one stands above the rest: This is a team that hasn't tasted postseason success since 2012. For veterans such as Derrick Favors and Gordon Hayward, it's the only thing that really matters.

"I want to get to the playoffs," Favors said. "That's my only goal for the year."

There is internal playing experience when it comes to deep teams. Johnson played a season with Steve Nash and Amare Stoudemire in Phoenix on a team where there were plenty of shooters and only one basketball.

But Johnson said Nash was such a leader and such a good distributor on the floor that he counts it as the one team he's played on that had terrific chemistry.

"It wasn't the things we did on the court," Johnson said. "It was what we did off the court. Steve was the head of it. We all hung out in the same places, we did the same things. Really getting to know the guy next to you, that's really important."

And then you have Lyles, who played on a University of Kentucky team so stacked

that he was forced to play out of position at small forward in order to see the floor. The frontcourt he played on featured three lottery picks, including himself. Devin Booker — who was sensational in his rookie season with the Phoenix Suns — wasn't even a starter on that team.

Yet, that Kentucky group featured very little ego. Its coach — John Calipari — convinced most on that team they would be first-round picks. They bonded through that common goal, and became one of the better college basketball teams ever.

At the end of the day, that situation isn't dissimilar to what the Jazz have. There's plenty of talent. There could be a minutes crunch at times. But the goal of making the playoffs is so prevalent within the roster that it could override many would-be issues.

"At Kentucky we didn't have a problem with playing time, because we all knew eventually everyone would get their chance," Lyles said. "We had two guys at every position, almost like two platoons. The same kind of thing can go on here."

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## Team takes stand during anthem

By **TONY JONES**

*The Salt Lake Tribune*

Utah Jazz players and coaches talked throughout training camp about how to weigh in on the social unrest around the country after a series of shootings of unarmed African-Americans by law enforcement.

The team resolved to make a collective statement during the playing of the national anthem — as a growing number of professional athletes and teams are doing. At the same time, the Jazz also wanted to be respectful of the anthem and the U.S. flag.

During preseason, the Jazz believe they found a way to do both.

The Jazz — players and coaches — stood in a straight line and locked arms around one another's shoulders in a show of unity during the playing of the "Star-Spangled Banner." At the other end of the floor of the preseason opener, the Portland Trail Blazers made their own gesture, standing in a circle, with their arms around one another.

"We felt that something needed to be done as a group," Utah point guard George Hill said.

And the team plans to keep doing it.

"It's a gesture that we're going to continue to do, until we see a little bit of change," Utah shooting guard Rodney Hood said. "We all have different views. We all know what's going on. But we decided that we want to embrace each other, and show a sign of unity. We know that we have a platform, so we want to use it."

As professional sports teams go, the Jazz have a bit of an unusual makeup. Forward Derrick Favors and Hill hail from inner cities, while Gordon Hayward and Jeff Withey grew up in the suburbs. Raul Neto, Joe Ingles, Rudy Gobert, Danté Exum and Boris Diaw all come from other countries. In that sense, the Jazz

After group discussion, players decide kneeling will not be done individually.

represent a lot of places and points of view.

That wasn't always easy to navigate as the training camp conversations unfolded. Opinions were strong and sometimes dissenting through the course of the team discussions, which were sparked by San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who initially sat during the national anthem in the NFL's preseason, but eventually began kneeling once the regular season began.

The Jazz ultimately agreed they wanted to send a message of unity — and avoid being polarizing. Hill acknowledged there might still be some backlash; some may not like the team's gesture. But the important thing to him

is that the Jazz reached common ground as a team.

"We wanted to embrace each other as teammates," Hill said. "We know that we have different backgrounds and that race isn't everything. We knew that some had different opinions. But we just basically wanted to give a hug and hold our brother. That's really the message we tried to send."

Jazz players say their message also extends beyond borders. While the U.S. police shootings have been a focus, Gobert said social justice is an issue in his native France. And he has been active on social media saying so.

"If I have something to say, and it's not going to offend anybody," Gobert said, "... I

just want to say it."

The NBA prohibited players from sitting during the national anthem in 1996, when the Denver Nuggets' Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf began protesting during the "Star-Spangled Banner," citing religious reasons. However, the league has been actively working with teams and players this fall on how they can best express their feelings within its guidelines.

NBA players have been speaking out in different ways. The Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James, New York Knicks' Carmelo Anthony, Los Angeles Clippers' Chris Paul and Chicago Bulls' Dwyane Wade each spoke out on the issue during the "ESPY Awards." Oklahoma City Thunder

guard Russell Westbrook has made his feelings known on Instagram.

For the Jazz, it was important to make a similarly strong statement, but the players and coaches didn't want to do anything to make it uncomfortable for anyone.

"This was a show of unity for us all the way around," Favors said. "We wanted to come together, and we wanted to be respectful of the flag. But we wanted to make a statement at the same time. We wanted to make it comfortable for everyone, but we also wanted to bring awareness as to what's going on around the country."

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SEAN MEAGHER | *The Oregonian*

Jazz players stand with arms together during the national anthem before playing the Portland Trail Blazers on Oct. 3.



FRANCISCO KJOLSETH | The Salt Lake Tribune

The return of guard Danté Exum and the acquisition of three veterans are two of the reasons why the Jazz will push the offensive tempo this season.

# Fast and furious

Team wants to speed things up this season offensively.

By **TONY JONES**  
*The Salt Lake Tribune*

Outside of Gordon Hayward and Rodney Hood, and with the possible exception of Derrick Favors, the Utah Jazz suffered from a lack of dynamic offensive weapons last season. Shooting guard Alec Burks could qualify as one, but he was hurt for most of the season.

As a result, and because a suffocating defense was a main strength, the Jazz offense looked like the basketball equivalent of three yards and a cloud of dust. Limiting possessions. Milking the full 24 seconds off the shot clock on possessions. Turning down transition opportunities for fear of getting into a track meet. Those were the keys to victory for the Jazz last year.

Increased depth, a better bench, more dynamic players and an adjusted mentality could put forth a different team this season, offensively. No, Utah isn't suddenly going to morph into the Showtime Lakers of the '80s, or the Golden State Warriors from the current era. But this team will attempt to play a little faster, and with a little more tempo.

"Coach (Quin Snyder) has been telling us to push the ball a lot in practice and in the games," Utah forward Joe Johnson said. "We have so many guys who can rebound and push the rock and make plays, that it makes sense for us to get out and run. We want to make plays, move the ball and get good shots."

Last year, the Jazz averaged 95.4 possessions per game — last in the NBA. That was somewhat balanced out by a Utah defense which ranked seventh overall in efficiency. But that first number revealed the Jazz's lack of depth, especially in the perimeter spots.

George Hill is on board this season, and Danté Exum is back and healthy, which should help solve the point guard woes. In training camp, the Jazz

## Last season the Jazz ...

Averaged 95.4 possessions per game, last in the NBA. That translated into 97.7 points per game, 28th in the league.

## So in the offseason ...

The Jazz added offensive weapons in George Hill, Joe Johnson and Boris Diaw. Diaw may already be Utah's best passer, a skill the Jazz have desperately wanted out of one of their big men.

## And in the preseason ...

Utah scored over 100 points in three of its first five games, and are averaging 100.6 per contest. After having scored 30 or more points in a quarter 48 times in 82 games last season, it had five in the preseason.

also played with a 14-second clock in scrimmage situations, instead of the normal 24-second clock.

Early result: The Jazz have averaged one 30-point quarter per game during the preseason, and are shooting for more.

"It's about getting good shots every time," Hill said. "We have to take care of the ball as well. We can say we want to be faster, but we can't do that if we're turning the ball over. We'll have the opportunity to push the ball, and we have to take advantage of that. But at the end of the day, it's about limiting turnovers and taking good shots."

Even with Hayward, Favors and Hood missing most of the preseason, the Jazz have shot the ball better and scored with more frequency. Most surprising offensively has been Rudy Gobert, who has a 36-minute average of 22 points and 13 rebounds during the preseason. If Gobert — who averaged just over nine points per game last season — can become a viable threat within the Jazz offense, their overall ceiling increases dramatically.

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## New adventures of old veterans



By **AARON FALK**

*The Salt Lake Tribune*

Most of the renovation projects planned for Vivint Smart Home Arena will be done next summer, but the Jazz front office didn't want to wait until then to give their locker room a bit of a makeover.

The new carpets, lights and wood are months away, but, more importantly, the Jazz's architect has upgraded it with skill, wisdom and experience.

Offseason acquisitions George Hill, Joe Johnson and Boris Diaw have a combined seven all-star appearances, 284 playoff games and an NBA championship among them — and the Jazz hope their leadership will help a young team take the next step.

"We wanted to add experience, size, physicality, shooting and passing, and we were able to do so," general manager

Dennis Lindsey said. "I think it's very complementary to our younger veterans who have been here for a while. It was a natural step."

The Jazz were one of the youngest teams in the NBA last season, but eventually you have to grow up. So Lindsey turned a first-round draft pick into Hill, a veteran point guard who should help stabilize the team's weakest position a season ago. Lindsey then lured Johnson to Salt Lake City from Brooklyn, convincing a 13-year starter that his scoring off the bench could help turn Utah into a threat in the West. Finally, the GM took advantage of the San Antonio Spurs' need to dump salary to pick up Diaw, a playmaking big man whose skillset will give head coach Quin Snyder versatility his roster has sorely lacked.

"It was something that was just self evident," Snyder said

of why now was the time to make the moves. "[Lindsey] knows the right time to do things. There's a big picture we've been conscious of and he has orchestrated."

With the regular season about to get underway, the Jazz believe they have already seen their new veterans' value show in training camp.

Diaw has had a calming influence on his countryman, Jazz center Rudy Gobert. Shooting guard Rodney Hood has expressed his excitement about having Johnson on the roster, calling him the "mentor-type guy that I haven't had my first couple years" in the NBA. Hill, meanwhile, has taken the 21-year-old Dante Exum under his wing.

"I was a young rookie when I got [to San Antonio]," Hill said of his first year in this NBA with the Spurs, "and Tim [Duncan] did the same thing

**Snyder says adding experience with Diaw, Hill and Johnson was 'self evident' after Jazz missed playoffs by one game last season.**

FRANCISCO KJOLSETH |  
*The Salt Lake Tribune*

**Smooth playmaking post player Boris Diaw, above, is one of three veteran additions the Jazz made over the summer with George Hill and Joe Johnson.**

with me, kind of put his arm around me and led the way. As a rookie, I needed that. I knew that me coming in, that's what we needed here is a little veteran leadership."

The Jazz came agonizingly close to a playoff berth last season, finishing one game out of the final spot in the West. Certainly, they could have used Hill's playmaking and scoring when guards Exum and Alec Burks went down with injuries. The Jazz were 11-21 in games that were within three points in the final minute. Surely, they could have used Johnson's experience in the clutch.

"The talent is definitely here," Johnson said. "For them being just a game or two away from making the playoffs last year, a little veteran help could definitely get them over the hump."

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# Hill wants to lend a hand

Utah's new point guard hopes to make the game easier for Gordon Hayward.

By **AARON FALK**

*The Salt Lake Tribune*

Gordon Hayward has been the Utah Jazz's do-it-all star over the past three seasons — not just the straw that stirs the milkshake, but ice cream, the soda jerk, and the napkin, too.

But the Jazz's new starting point has a different vision for the team's leading scorer.

"He's kind of like our cherry on top of the ice cream," George Hill said recently. "We have to be the whip cream and the shake. He's the top of it."

Moving the metaphor away from the counter and onto the court, that means giving Hayward some of the support he's sorely lacked during his stint as Utah's top offensive threat once he returns from injury.

In each of his past three campaigns, Hayward has seen his scoring average increase, from 16.2 points per game three seasons ago to 19.3 and up to 19.7 last season. With another year of experience, Hayward figures to remain the Jazz's No. 1 option and their leading scorer again this season. But a better supporting cast — led by the arrival of Hill from the Indiana Pacers — could be exactly what Hayward needs to leap into a higher echelon of NBA scorers.

"I want to take a little pressure off him," Hill said, "and make it a little easier for him to use his scoring abilities."

Hayward wouldn't mind the extra help.

Last season, about 45 percent of Hayward's field goals were assisted. That number puts him in the middle of the pack among the league's top 25 scorers from a year ago, but at the low end among the forwards in that category.

"What a lot of guys in Gordon's position get that Gordon hasn't got is somebody to get him some easy shots from time to time," said Rob Blackwell, a trainer who has worked

with both Hayward and Hill at St. Vincent Sports Performance in Indianapolis. "Gordon really labors to create his own opportunities."

The Jazz hope that will change now, at least a little. Hayward's all-around game is what makes him one of the best small forwards in the NBA and Jazz coach Quin

Snyder will want the ball in his star player's hands plenty, creating for others and exploiting mismatches for himself.

Hayward did not have any troubles scoring in his first two games of the preseason before his injury, averaging 16 points on nine shots in those contests. And while it's too

soon to tell how much Hill's presence might impact Hayward's role on the court, the two Hoosiers — who already have some rapport from summertime workouts and pickup games in Indiana — have high hopes for what Hill's arrival in Salt Lake will mean.

"I was definitely excited when I got that phone call," said Hayward recalling the day he first heard the Jazz would trade their first-round draft pick for the veteran point guard.

Hill gives the Jazz another shooter (he hit nearly 41 percent of his 3-pointers last season) to give Hayward extra space to work and another ball-handler to take pressure of Hayward, who has sometimes struggled with turnovers in late-game situations.

"Coach Quin, that's one of the things he's best at, is putting guys in situations where they can be successful," Hayward said. "Whether that's me having the ball or George having the ball ... we'll take it. Just having another weapon is really good for our team."

And that should be good for Hayward, too.

"If Gordon's not going, George can get him going," Blackwell said. "And if he is going, he can keep him going. ... I think George can improve [Hayward's scoring average by] 3-5 points a night," he said, "and make him one of the elite players."

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CRAIG MITCHELLDYER | The Associated Press

## Gordon Hayward's helpers

Season	PPG	AFG%*
2010-11	5.4	75.4
2011-12	11.8	73.0
2012-13	14.1	68.8
2013-14	16.2	50.0
2014-15	19.3	43.8
2015-16	19.7	45.3

\*—Percentage of made field goals assisted

Source: NBA.com/Stats





STEVE GRIFFIN | The Salt Lake Tribune

## Hood enjoys new mentor, teammate



LENNIE MAHLER | Tribune file photo

Newcomer Joe Johnson wants to help third-year shooting guard “get to next level” as a scorer.

By **AARON FALK**

The Salt Lake Tribune

As a child, Rodney Hood was too afraid to ask his favorite player for an autograph when he happened to run into him one day. Instead, it was his mother who had to speak up for her shy child and make the introduction that ended with an NBA all-star posing for a photo with a young Hood.

These days, however, that same all-star will be making sure the bashful boy from the photo knows he shouldn't be afraid to ask him for anything.

“He's a great kid, great talent,” Utah Jazz forward Joe Johnson said of Hood. “I'm looking forward to helping him out.”

Entering his third NBA season, the 23-year-old Hood figures to be the Jazz's starting shooting guard, one of the team's most versatile offensive weapons and a key cog in a roster built with playoff aspirations. He reached this point, in some ways, by modeling aspects of his game after Johnson, his favorite player as a boy growing up in Mississippi. Now, Hood and the Jazz hope Johnson's mentorship in the locker room will elevate their young star's game even more.

“He has the total package as far as being athletic, can shoot, create. Those are the things that have gotten him here,” Johnson said of the rising Jazz star sitting next to him on the dais during a media day interview. “But it's the little savvy things that you learn align the way that we call quote-unquote cheats. As you become a veteran, you learn the tricks of the trade. If he can learn those things early in his career, I think it will be even better.”

Johnson is a seven-time all-star who has logged more than 41,000 minutes, scored more than 19,000 points and started in nearly 100 playoff games. When Jazz forward Gordon Hayward was a rookie, Johnson was the player he told his friends he had the toughest time trying to defend.

“I felt like I was on an island when I had to guard him,” Hayward said.

But at age 35, Johnson is in a different place.

“I didn't come here trying to be a star or a starter,” he said, with a laugh. “... Going into my 16th season, I just want to get up and down the court.”

But he also wants to make sure he

helps Hood reach a different, a better, place in his young career too.

“We both felt his contribution could be significant regardless of whether he's starting or playing 30 minutes a game or whatever the situation is,” Jazz head coach Quin Snyder said.

Johnson brings with him experience and confidence, the ability to score in isolation and the versatility to spell Hood on the wing or play a small-ball power forward. And he wants to impart the knowledge he's acquired.

A young Jazz team has learned lessons on the fly the past three seasons. But with the addition of Johnson, George Hill and Boris Diaw, they know have a core of locker room leaders to help them take the next step.

“The talent's definitely there,” Johnson said. “The Jazz have done a great job of mixing in veteran talent to help lead these guys in the right direction.”

Already, Snyder said, he sees similarities between Hood and his childhood hero.

“Joe's offensive versatility is unique,” the coach said. “That's one of the things I [see] in Rodney — knocking down a 3, in pick-and-roll, having a post game and just playing at a pace where you look really comfortable and in control all the time.”

Entering his third NBA season, the Jazz expect improvement from Hood.

“I don't know what that will manifest itself into in terms of stats and all that, but I think I'm better equipped to help my team than last year and the year before,” Hood said. “I've been through some bumps and bruises and I think it will help me going forward this year.”

Johnson and Hood worked out together in Atlanta for part of this summer before joining up and getting to work early in Salt Lake before the start of camp.

“It's just a great feeling to have like a mentor-type guy that I haven't had my first couple years,” Hood said.

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### By the numbers

**Per game averages, 20-15-16 season**

**Joe Johnson** » 12.2 points, 3.6 rebounds, 3.9 assists

**Rodney Hood** » 14.5 points, 3 rebounds, 2.3 assists

## Danté's inferno

After a hellish experience with his knee injury, Jazz point guard says he has emerged stronger than ever.

By **TONY JONES**

*The Salt Lake Tribune*

It wasn't the actual pain that scared Danté Exum.

When Exum executed a jump-stop in the lane on Aug. 4, 2015, and collapsed to the floor, he knew. Despite his Australian teammate Nathan Jawai yelling at him to get up and telling him nothing was wrong, Exum knew the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee was torn. The injury ended his second NBA season before it could even start.

To be sure, Exum felt the physical pain. A torn ligament makes escaping pain impossible. But the mental anguish, for him, was the worst. The wondering, the fear, the regret, the questions — that made the physical pain almost an afterthought.

"There were plenty of times where I wondered, 'why me?'" Exum told *The Tribune*. "I wondered if I would be the guy I was before the injury. I was supposed to go home to Australia the next day, and I hadn't been home in a year. I wondered, what's going to happen with the Jazz? That was the pain I was going through."

After almost 14 months of rehabilitation, much of it shrouded in secrecy, Exum says his knee feels better and stronger than before the injury. He says his explosion off the dribble, his blinding speed, his jumping ability are back.

The rehab was painful and tedious. The Jazz organization slowed him throughout the rehabilitation process — significantly in some instances. Exum was cleared for basketball activities on May 25, but the Jazz did not allow him to play in summer league or for Australia at Rio in the Summer Olympic Games.

"We could've pushed the envelope and tried to have him

ready by March, or somewhere in that time frame," Jazz general manager Dennis Lindsey told *The Tribune*. "We had to tell him 'no rush.' Clearly the goal was to try to get him back. But what we wanted to do was honor the

make his release smoother. During games, Exum sat behind Utah's bench to observe. He says a year of watching games will help him mentally — how to manage a game like a veteran while still being only 21 years old.



FRANCISCO KJOLSETH | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

next 12 years over the next 12 months. That's what we tried to communicate to Danté."

Exum admits frustration at times during the road back. There were plenty of days when he wanted to do more, but couldn't. He instead resigned himself to the daily grind of controlling what he could and getting better in little pieces, not big chunks.

He and Jazz assistant Lamar Skeeter met each day for skill work. Exum worked on tightening his ballhandling, which was loose at times during his rookie season. He took up residence in the weight room to bulk up. He worked with Skeeter to refine his jumper, trying to

More than most young players, Exum now appreciates the sport, and has a full understanding of his athletic mortality. Exum knows the game isn't promised to him, which has instilled a fierce hunger heading into the 2016-17 season.

"It's not that I took the game for granted before," Exum said. "But now that I finally have that privilege again, I think once you sit out all 82, you just build that fire every day. I think I have a greater respect in taking care of my body and trying to be good every night."

Away from the spotlight is how Exum got back into a playing groove during the

summer. He started off playing one-on-one. Then, two-on-two. Eventually, he ramped up to three-on-three. With much of the roster enjoying the off-season, the Jazz brought former local college basketball stars such as Brandon Davies, Tyler Haws and Spencer Butterfield to get Exum up to speed.

"He had a great work ethic, that's what I remember," said

important day was went Exum crossed over, went into the lane off the dribble, and came to a jump stop — the same move that shredded his ACL.

Only this time, instead of crumbling to the floor, Exum exploded to the hoop. He scored. And when he turned to run back up the floor, he smiled.

"I was like, 'Man, I did it,'" Exum said. "Once I did that, I was like, 'I'm good. I'm ready to take the next step.'"

Exum returns to a different Jazz team from the one he left. He left as a starter and returns as a projected backup to veteran George Hill, acquired by Utah in late June. That doesn't mean Exum isn't important to Utah's fate this season, because he is. His 6-foot-6 frame is rare for a point guard, as well as his size and athleticism for that height.

But Hill's acquisition eases pressure on Exum, who won't be counted on to play 30 minutes per game or be counted on to run the team every minute he's on the floor.

On media day, Danté Exum put a Jazz uniform on again. The day after that, he took part in a formal practice again. And for him, the season opener against Portland will feel like Christmas has come early.

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### About Dante Exum

» Suffered a torn ACL on Aug. 4, 2015, playing in an international friendly for his home country, Australia.  
» Exum last played for the Jazz in a July 2015 summer league game against the Boston Celtics, scoring 20 points and adding five rebounds and five assists.

### Exum's rookie season

**G GS Min Pts A R FG 3P**  
82 41 22.2 4.8 2.4 1.6 .349 .314

# All grown up

Derrick Favors has gone from a shell-shocked teen in Brooklyn to one of the best power forwards in the NBA.



FRANCISCO KJOLSETH | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

By **STEVE LUHM**

*The Salt Lake Tribune*

Under the watchful eye of Utah Jazz fans, Derrick Favors has grown up.

After arriving from New Jersey as the centerpiece of a blockbuster trade in 2011, he has evolved from a shy, quiet 19-year-old into one of the best power players in the NBA.

If the Jazz take a step forward this season and reach the Western Conference playoffs, as many are predicting, Favors will likely do much of the heavy-lifting. He is an older veteran on the Jazz's roster — a paradoxical description, but one that describes Favors as he begins his sixth season in Utah.

"He's been terrific," coach Quin Snyder said. "His attitude has been very, very positive in a lot of situations and there's a focus. He's learning how to take advantage of things that are available to him offensively. Defensively, he's always a presence."

Said Favors: "We're getting used to the new guys — getting the chemistry back going. Everything has just been great. We're trying to improve off last year."

In every way but one — he missed 20 games because of injuries — Favors comes off his best all-around season. He averaged 16.4 points and 8.1 rebounds per game and shot 51.1 percent from the field.

Those numbers suggest ex-Jazz general manager Kevin O'Connor was right.

After the trade with New Jersey, O'Connor said the Jazz ranked Favors as the top player in the 2010 draft — ahead of John Wall, who went No. 1 to Washington and Evan Turner, who was picked second by Philadelphia. The Nets took Favors with the No. 3 pick but, eight months later, shipped him to Utah.

It was a good day for Jazz Nation, which has watched him mature into a franchise cornerstone with teammate Gordon Hayward.

"This is my seventh year in the NBA and a lot of guys will look at me for leadership, especially the young guys,"

Favors said. "They look for me and Gordon for leadership and I'm trying to do a good job in training camp."

Asked how he plans to lead, Favors said, "Just talk. Communication. Help them out when they are trying to figure out something. Just lead by example. Show them how it's done. But mostly go out there and lead by example."

The Jazz, of course, upgraded their roster by adding true veterans Boris Diaw, George Hill and Joe Johnson during the offseason. So, when it comes to leadership, Favors and Hayward won't be alone.

"The three guys we got have a lot of experience — a lot of playoff experience, a lot of championship experience. It's a big help for us," Favors said. "They help out in the locker room. They help out with whatever we need — just advising us. It's a big help having George, Joe and Boris around."

Favors isn't worried about Utah's chemistry.

"We have a lot of different guys who can do a lot of different things," he said. "We can go big. We can go small. We can stretch the floor out. We can be a defensive group. We can put an offensive group out there. So there are a lot of things we can do, but that's on the coach — to try and figure out what's best for us."

Favors credits much of his growth to assistant coach Antonio Langm who played at Duke when the Blue Devils won back-to-back NCAA titles in 1991-92. He played for six NBA teams, and also played and coached in Japan.

"He helps me out with everything — with basketball, with life. I can call him any time," Favors said. "He'll be in the gym with me all day, every day. In the summertime, he'll come down to Atlanta and help me. ... He's like a mentor — a brother to me — and I appreciate it."

Even if Lang is a former Blue Devil.

"I hate Duke," said Favors, who attended Georgia Tech for one season.

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By TONY JONES

*The Salt Lake Tribune*

Not many saw Rudy Gobert coming two years ago, which is why his ascension from a project to an intimidating defender was noteworthy and a little shocking.

Last season wasn't bad for the Jazz big man, either. He was one of the league's rebounding leaders with 11 per game. He supplemented that production with nine points and 2.2 blocked shots per game. It was a solid season as far as the stat sheet was concerned.

Yet, something was missing. The defensive dominance wasn't there every night. The 7-foot-1 Gobert was a deterrent at the rim, but opponents weren't terrified to drive the ball, like they had been previously. Then the Jazz center got hurt and missed a chunk of the season. The Frenchman also went through personal trials after seeing both Paris and Nice absorb large-scale terrorist attacks. And, of course, the Jazz missed the playoffs.

"It was a good experience to go through, but it was disappointing we didn't make the playoffs," Gobert said. "Some things I couldn't control. I got hurt, I came back. It was tough, but we learned a lot of things. I would say every game matters. You can't take any game lightly, especially when you miss the playoffs by two games. Everything matters."

Coaches and teammates have noticed a change in Gobert. Always fun-loving in the locker room, he hasn't been quite as gregarious as he had been previously. Gobert has always been serious about his craft, about winning, and about his desire to get better as a basketball player. Now, he has taken his focus to another level.

"You can see that his attention to detail is there," Jazz coach Quin Snyder said. "Rudy doesn't just want to be a good player. He wants to be a great player, and I think that's showing so far."

Gobert isn't shy about his

# Gobert stands tall again

Back to full health, French center is focused and productive in the post.



FRANCISCO KJOLSETH | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

goals for this season. He wants to be a leader on and off the floor. He wants to be good individually. Most importantly, he wants to win. He told himself that he never wanted to experience the feeling of going home early again.

"I want to be a guy who sets the tone defensively this year," Gobert said. "I want to be one of the guys that people look to."

With that resolve fueling him, Gobert went to work this summer. Yes, he played for

France in the Olympics. But he passed up the qualifying tournament, instead staying in Salt Lake City for much of the summer and working out.

On the court, he worked tirelessly with his coaches, in an attempt to add different skills to his offensive game. He has lived in the weight-room, adding muscle to his upper body. More importantly, Gobert has worked hard to add strength to his legs to help prevent injury.

"We think he's back to his

old self," Jazz forward Trey Lyles said. "You can tell he's spent a lot of time in the off-season working on his game and his body. He's taking more of a leadership role with the team. It's something you have to decide to do in your mind, and Rudy's doing it."

Gobert's contract status has been the topic of much speculation, although he insists he isn't worried about it. The center's agent and the Jazz front office did talk over the summer about a new deal.

There is no agreement in sight, but Gobert has publicly stated he wants to remain in Utah. If he doesn't reach an extension before the season, he will become a restricted free agent this summer.

"Both sides are not in a hurry right now," Gobert said. "There's trust between us and the Jazz. If it doesn't happen this season, it will happen in the summer."

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By AARON FALK

The Salt Lake Tribune

At his best, he is slashing to the basket, twirling through traffic and somehow finishing an awkward layup at the rim. At his best, he is the kind of instant offense off the bench that could put him in Sixth Man of the Year conversations. But after back-to-back campaigns beset by injury, Alec Burks is also a real question mark for the Utah Jazz.

Can he fit in an offense predicated on ball movement? Can he find minutes off a suddenly deep bench? Can he safely maintain his aggressive nature on the court?

Burks believes he's ready to provide some answers.

"I'm not worried," the shooting guard said. "... I know when I'm healthy, I know what I can do."

Burks had surgery to repair his fractured left fibula on Dec. 29 and had outpatient arthroscopic surgery June 8 "to clean out debris from his left knee and ankle."

Asked if Burks would be ready for the start of the season, Jazz head coach Quin Snyder said, "I would think so."

"[The medical staff] will tell me," Snyder said. "But what I'm told, what I see, there's good progress ... I think as he gets to a point we're going to see it go quicker."

The Jazz won't want to rush Burks, but missing any time this season would be a disappointment for the guard after what he has endured.

It was two years ago, on a drive to the basket, that Burks was fouled hard and came crashing to the floor. In the process, he aggravated a shoulder injury that he said had been bothering him since college.

After surgery to repair the damage, Burks swore he would be better than ever, truly feeling 100 percent healthy for the first time in his NBA career. And after logging 27 games during the 2014-15 campaign, he was eager to move forward.

But Burks' comeback campaign was halted prematurely. Last December, on another



FRANCISCO KJOLSETH | The Salt Lake Tribune

## High-wire act

Burks to "pick my spots" more upon returning to action.

**“I went to the offseason just to try to rehab and get better, get stronger, try to be the Alec I know I was before I got hurt.”**

drive to the basket, Burks was fouled by Clippers forward Paul Pierce. Again, the Jazz slasher came crashing down. This time, he broke his ankle and missed 50 games, before trying to return for his team's playoff push, only to realize he wasn't yet ready to be back.

"When I tried to come back, I really couldn't move like I'm used to moving," Burks said at the start of training camp. "So I went to the offseason just to try to rehab and get better, get stronger, try to be the Alec I know I was before I got hurt. I feel like I am. It's just a process of working my way through it. But I'm getting right. I'm getting close."

Burks jokes that he has "burned" the medical scooter he needed to get around at the end of last season and said he feels "more explosive and athletic" than even before the Jazz signed him to a four-year, \$42 million extension in 2014. But with his team eyeing a playoff appearance and more this season, Burks also appears to be focused on self-preservation, knowing his team is better with him out of slings and walking boots and in his No. 10 jersey.

"I feel like I'm going to evolve more. I feel like I'm going to shoot more. I shot the ball really well when I shot it last year," said Burks, who averaged 13.3 points per game and shot 40.5 percent from 3 during an abbreviated 2015-16 season.

Burks' role may be evolving, too. With a deeper bench, Burks will have to battle Rodney Hood, Gordon Hayward, Joe Johnson, Joe Ingles and even point guards George Hill and Danté Exum for minutes.

"I'm not worried about it," he said. "Everybody's a great player, everybody's willing to sacrifice for the greater good."

For Burks, that might mean playing it safer, even a little.

"I'm still going to be fearless. I'm still going to do the same things I do," he said. "But I'm just going to pick my spots more, chose when to be aggressive and when not to be."

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# Balanced budget

By **TONY JONES**  
The Salt Lake Tribune

The Jazz have been in asset accumulation mode since 2013. Utah has traded for Rudy Gobert, and drafted Danté Exum, Rodney Hood and Trey Lyles. This summer, the Jazz traded for Boris Diaw and George Hill, and signed Joe Johnson in free agency.

Favors may be first up for a contract extension, with Hayward, Exum, Hood, Gobert and more on horizon.

Bringing together key parts to surround the still-young core of Gordon Hayward, Derrick Favors and Alec Burks has given the Jazz a team many observers are pegging for a big jump this coming

season — not only the NBA playoffs, but the possibility of a top-four seed in the West and winning a round in the postseason.

However, there is a flip side to amassing talent. Eventually,

those young players play through their rookie contracts (which are relatively cheap), and set themselves up for big paydays. The Jazz are reaching that point, which makes this season critical, both on

and off the floor.

Hayward's pending free agency is well known. He's expected to opt out of the final year of his contract next summer and cash in for max dollars, whether it be with the Jazz, or with another team.

Beyond Hayward, however, Favors comes off his current contract at the end of

Please see **CASH ON PAGE 31**

## Cash

» Continued from 30

the 2017-2018 season. Gobert is set to hit restricted free agency in 2017, and Hood and Exum will become restricted free agents in 2018. That means most of the Jazz core members are in line for new contracts, and most of them — if the free agency period this summer is an indicator — are good enough to make themselves a lot of money.

So, Jazz general manager Dennis Lindsey may have some interesting decisions on his hands.

“Post Karl Malone and John Stockton, the Jazz have had some decent years, most notably with Deron Williams and Paul Millsap,” said Eric Pincus, an NBA salary cap specialist for basketballinsiders.com. “They’ve done a great job in building this current team, but now this is a key moment. Hayward can leave, Gobert is up for an extension. The front office has to make decisions now for the long term. They need to show who they are, and the players need to show they are a core worth building around.”

Utah trading Tibor Pleiss to the Philadelphia 76ers in the summer was a move on Lindsey’s part in order to create more cap space. Shedding Pleiss’ contract puts the Jazz roughly \$12 million under the cap.

Lindsey can do several things with the money. He can sit on it, do nothing and prepare for the financial hit that’s sure to come after this season. He can wait until the trade deadline and possibly make a move, depending on where the team is and how the Jazz are performing. He can also renegotiate and extend either Hill or Favors.

“It’s a trade where we essentially exchanged future draft picks [the Jazz sent Philly two 2017 second rounders in the Pleiss deal] for more cap flexibility,” Lindsey said.

If Utah extends someone, it will almost certainly be Favors. The power forward, who is approaching the

### Jazz financial timeline

Player	2016-17 Cap Hit	2017-18 Cap Hit	2018-19 Cap Hit
Gordon Hayward	\$16,073,140	\$16,736,710	
Derrick Favors	\$11,050,000	\$12,000,000	
Joe Johnson	\$11,000,000	\$10,505,000	
Alec Burks	\$10,154,495	\$10,845,506	\$11,536,515
George Hill	\$8,000,000		
Boris Diaw	\$7,000,000	\$7,500,000	
Dante Exum	\$3,940,320	\$4,992,385	
Shelvin Mack	\$2,433,334		
Trey Lyles	\$2,340,600	\$2,441,400	\$3,364,249
Joe Ingles	\$2,250,000		
Rudy Gobert	\$2,121,288		
Rodney Hood	\$1,406,520	\$2,386,864	
Henry Sims	\$1,050,961		
Chris Johnson	\$1,050,961		
Jeff Withey	\$1,015,696		
Raul Neto	\$937,800	\$1,014,746	
Eric Dawson	\$874,636		
Joel Bolomboy	\$600,000	\$905,249	\$1,050,262
Marcus Foige	\$543,471	\$905,249	
Quincy Pond	\$543,471	\$905,249	\$1,050,262
<b>TEAM TOTAL</b>	<b>\$84,386,693</b>	<b>\$71,138,358</b>	<b>\$17,001,288</b>

SOURCE: BASKETBALL-REFERENCE.COM

#### Summer, 2017

- » Gordon Hayward can opt out and be an unrestricted free agent
- » George Hill becomes an unrestricted free agent
- » Shelvin Mack becomes an unrestricted free agent
- » Rudy Gobert becomes a restricted free agent
- » Rodney Hood and Dante Exum become extension-eligible

#### Summer, 2018

- » Derrick Favors becomes an unrestricted free agent
- » Rodney Hood and Dante Exum become restricted free agents
- » Trey Lyles becomes extension-eligible



**Hayward** » Can opt out next summer.

They also know there is a way to do it without going into the luxury tax, something the team’s ownership has historically been against.

That’s what makes the Jazz’ season on the court so important. If the current team plays well, and shows signs of becoming a contender, committing financially to the core in place becomes an easier decision. If the Jazz sputter and perform below expectation, Lindsey will have to make some hard choices.

The jump in the salary cap is expected to ease some of the burden. It’s \$94 million this season, which is a big jump from last season. It is expected to rise to around \$102 million for the 2017-18 season. That will allow Lindsey to dole out some big paydays, if he so chooses.

But a lot of Utah’s financial future will depend on current success. With a roster turning the corner, a front office on the cusp of a financial turning point and a fan base starved for a winner, nothing short of the postseason may be enough to deem this season a success.

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prime of his career, is making \$11 million per year on what is a team-friendly deal. Once he hits free agency, he will likely command a max contract.

Before trading Pleiss, the Jazz didn’t have the requisite cap space to offer Favors an extension. Now they do. And because Favors is an anchor for Utah on both ends — he and Hayward are probably the Jazz’s best two-way players — it could make sense to lock Favors up now, rather than risk him leaving in free agency.

“The reason to give Favors more money now is to get one or two more years added to his contract,” Pincus said. “Basically, trading Pleiss opened up money that could help keep Favors. If they don’t extend Favors, I’m not sure it was a worthwhile deal.”

The Jazz know keeping the current core together beyond this season will take creativity.



RICK EGAN | Tribune file photo

Utah Jazz general manager Dennis Lindsey will soon have several expiring contracts to deal with.



# New digs

A courtesy rendering of the \$125 million Vivint Smart Home Arena renovation project shows what the renovated outside concourse will look like.

## Arena renovation's grand plan for the next year includes extensive work done inside and outside.

**By AARON FALK**

*The Salt Lake Tribune*

The Utah Jazz's unofficial slogan for the next 12 months: "Pardon our dust."

A \$110-million remodel of the team's downtown arena is underway, and expected to be completed in time for the start of the 2017-18 NBA season. And as they unveiled renderings and plans, officials promised a makeover

that would give the quarter-century old building new life.

"We have an opportunity to do something very special that will last for another 25 to 30 years," an emotional Gail Miller said, echoing her late husband's words to Salt Lake City leaders when he first pitched his dream for the downtown venue.

The renovation includes planned upgrades on all six levels of Vivint Smart Home

Arena and includes the addition of a 12,000 square-foot atrium to help fans get out of the elements as they move through security, new suites and lounges for fans, and a revamped locker room and other amenities aimed at attracting and keeping players.

LHM officials have already started work on some projects, including adding solar panels to the arena's roof. But fans won't see the biggest changes

until the end of this season.

"From top to bottom, from the solar roof to the locker room, from the upper bowl to the lower bowl, there are changes in store for the benefit of all," Vivint Arena president Jim Olson said.

From the outside, passers-by will see the extended lobby, which will house ticketing and box office services. The renovations will also include the addition of large screens on

the plaza for outdoor parties.

"We're looking forward to late spring games, into May and June, where people gather to watch the game on the new LED signs as the bowl is filled on the inside as well," Jazz president Steve Starks said.

Inside the arena, plans call for the four corners of the upper bowl to be opened to create a space where fans can gather or seek concessions

*Please see DIGS, 33*





Renderings of the Vivint Smart Home Arena renovation project show some of the plans that the organization has, which include extending the lobby to shield fans from the elements, redesigned suites and club lounges, revamped concourses for fans to walk around without missing the action and new restaurants and concessions.



## Digs

» Continued from 32

without having to miss out on action. The renovation will also include new and redesigned suites and club lounges, and reworked concourses to improve fan circulation. New restaurants, concession and souvenir options will be available.

New seats will be put in the arena — no word if they will remain green — and the stadium's 19,911 capacity will be reduced slightly as a result of the changes.

LHM officials said the project was aimed at improving fan experience, but it will also help the franchise close the gap financially with its competition.

"I know it makes a significant difference," Miller said of the renovation's impact on the bottom line.

Icon Venue Group, a company that oversees the development and construction of facilities throughout the world, will help manage the project. Icon recently has been involved in the restoration of Wrigley Field in Chicago, the construction of the new Golden 1 Center in Sacramento and planning for the new home of the NBA's Milwaukee



Bucks.

"Behind the scenes, this building has great bones," Icon CEO Tim Romani said. "It's a phenomenal building. It allows the renovation project to really focus on fan experience instead of using a large portion of the budget to fix costly projects that are inherent" with an older arena.

Murray Beynon, of SCI Architects, will head the project. Beynon led the recent renovation of Madison

Square Garden in New York City, a project that cost about \$1 billion. Utah-based Layton Construction will serve as the general contractor for the project.

The Miller family has said it will foot the entirety of the project's upfront cost. The Salt Lake City Redevelopment Agency has pledged up to \$22.7 million in tax breaks to help recoup some of the expense.

Miller said the decision to renovate rather than

relocate the arena should prove the family's commitment to Utah.

"This should make no question in their minds that we're committed to being here," she said. "We're committed to getting a championship. We're here for the long haul and I hope fans will support us in that, because without them we really can't."

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**“ We have an opportunity to do something very special that will last for another 25 to 30 years.”**

**JAZZ OWNER  
GAIL MILLER**



GORDON MONSON'S VIEWPOINT »

# Jazz need to make Lady Luck smile again



STEVE GRIFFIN | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

Injured Utah Jazz forward Gordon Hayward sits behind the bench in street clothes during the team's home preseason opener at Vivint Smart Home Arena on Oct. 12.

**B**efore we get started here, quick, somebody, somewhere, somehow, gain the favor of Lady Luck and toss it to the Jazz.

They're in dire need. Still.

When the Jazz started falling from their projected flight toward the playoffs last year, after having lost Dante Exum for the season before the season began, and then, losing so many others for various periods en route, it was clear that the developmental project for the second-youngest team in the league had been compromised.

The Jazz still nearly made those playoffs, but general manager Dennis Lindsey learned from that experience and addressed it as best he could this offseason. Not only did he bring in veterans to help stabilize some of the weaker areas of the team, he brought them in numbers.

Now, there are two things the Jazz have to accomplish this time around, and one of them, the second, is the most important of all: 1) They must jell, and 2) They must ... get lucky. They must stay healthy.

On account of picking up George Hill, Joe Johnson and Boris Diaw, and gaining back Exum, the Jazz can better abide a few lesser injuries along the way and stay afloat. But if they want to make a marked jump, if they want to live up to so many positive expectations, they need all hands available.

OK, that may not be the best way of putting it, considering they've already lost Gordon Hayward with

a broken finger on his left hand for the next four to six weeks, scheduled as he is, if he heals well, to miss somewhere in the range of 13 regular-season games. But whether it's hands or knees or backs or ankles or feet, the Jazz need fortune to smile upon them.

During a recent conversation with a Jazz front office member, he suggested only half-jokingly that maybe the basketball gods now have taken their revenge on the team for allowing its historical mainstays — Karl Malone and John Stockton — to last through the better parts of two decades without getting hurt. He's hoping the revenge has been exacted, and now, everything is synced up for a serious run.

In the tight West, it will be important for the Jazz to survive those first 13 games. Losing a few extra games over that span could make the difference between the Jazz getting home-court advantage in the postseason's first round and avoiding playing, say, the Warriors or the Spurs straightaway. That's assuming they really are good enough to place them automatically in the playoffs.

In the past, Quin Snyder hasn't had the chance to show what he can do on the track because he hasn't had the horsepower in the car engine to drive hard. Now, unless gaskets keep blowing, he

does. The combinations he uses, the flow at the offensive end and the cohesion at the defensive end, are what could transform 2016-17 into a memorable experience.

Snyder knows all of this and says he's looking forward to seeking out those best combinations and utilizing them: "That's what the preseason is for."

The blending of the young with the old, acclimating the entire roster has been in throttle-up mode since the beginning of September, when for the first time

all of the team's players were in Salt Lake City, working together in the Jazz's open gym. Now, if Lady Luck will only smile.

"Things happen," Lindsey says. "It's basketball. It's dynamic. There are large bodies moving very

fast. We've had our share of injuries, but this is a no-excuse business."

He's right, and that's a fine attitude and all.

But for the Jazz's sake ... somebody, somewhere, somehow, must gain or regain the angry Lady's favor, must send up an offering or a prayer or a chant or a dance or some pixie dust. Something. If the curse is lost, the season will be won.

**GORDON MONSON** hosts "The Big Show" with Spence Checketts weekdays from 3-7 p.m. on the Zone Sports Network, 97.5 FM and 1280 AM. Twitter: @GordonMonson.

For all Utah accomplished during this offseason, reaching its goals may come down to simple good fortune.

KURT KRAGTHORPE'S VIEWPOINT »

## Slow start will keep Jazz from 50-win mark



In March, before one of the two games Gordon Hayward missed last season, Jazz coach Quin Snyder good-naturedly played along with the suggestion that the team's series of injuries was getting old.

"Oh, sure. I was tired of it in November," Snyder said.

It is happening again in 2016-17, darkening the Jazz's outlook for a breakthrough season. Hayward will miss the first dozen or so games with a broken finger, which is damaging enough — even without the unspoken fear that his injury signals another round of misfortune for this team.

Everyone figured the Jazz endured enough of this stuff last season, right? They

played through the extended absences of Rudy Gobert, Derrick Favors and Alec Burks, following Danté Exum's season-ending knee injury in the summer. And now Hayward is sidelined, taking away the Jazz's best all-around player.

"Take Note" is a good theme for the Jazz's anticipated emergence this season, but "Check Back Later" might be better advice. Beyond the practical issues of rotations and depth, there's this sense of gloom that comes with another significant injury.

Or is it just me? Las Vegas oddsmakers still rank the Jazz No. 5 in the Western Conference (via [bovada.lv](#)), with better chances of making the playoffs than teams such as Houston, Portland

and Oklahoma City. The Jazz should approach 50 wins. But to do so, they'll have to play better than .500 basketball in Hayward's absence, which is why I'm saying 48 is the number.

These are the other numbers you need to know about the Jazz's immediate future: 12-1 and 1-11.

The Jazz's record will land somewhere between such extremes during Hayward's absence. Those frames of reference are the start of the 2006-07 season, when the Jazz made a significant jump into the NBA playoffs, and the beginning of the 2013-14 season, when everything crumbled for former coach Tyrone Corbin.

Each comparison is

meaningful, in the context of the coming season. In '06-07, with Deron Williams moving into his second year, Carlos Boozer healthy and the newly acquired Derek Fisher providing leadership and depth, the Jazz used a 12-1 start to help them go from 41 to 51 wins.

That provides some perspective to the Jazz's expected climb in 2016-17. Without such a phenomenal start, the 10-win improvement of '06-07 would have been impossible. And clearly, the Jazz are not going to do anything like that in October/November without Hayward, so going from 40 to 50 wins this season may be tougher than people would like to believe.

The Jazz's 1-11 start in 2013-14 had a lot to do with Trey

Burke's broken finger, which occurred in an Oct. 12 preseason game and required surgery. As a rookie, Burke was not as important to the Jazz as Hayward is now, but he certainly was vital to them, considering their roster of point guards.

After everything the Jazz went through in 2015-16, when a series of injuries basically kept them out of the playoffs, the hope was that a healthy team could take a big step this season. That still can happen, but Hayward's injury makes it much more difficult. The team will need newcomers Joe Johnson, George Hill and Boris Diaw to be steady influences.

Burks is a wild card in this discussion, coming off the injury that kept him out for four months last season. Rodney Hood is the most logical answer to how the Jazz will cover Hayward's absence. In that game vs. Cleveland with Hayward missing in March, Hood delivered 28 points in a 94-85 win over the eventual NBA champions.

The potential exists for a positive twist to Hayward's injury. I've always believed he would become an even better player when the Jazz surrounded him with more talent, as they've done in 2016. If they play respectably without him for those first three weeks of the season and he sees that some of his workload can be absorbed, the injury actually may benefit Hayward and the Jazz.

That's assuming his ailment doesn't spread through the team, like last season.

Another injury to a key player tempers enthusiasm, but maybe it's just me.



Quin Snyder talks to Gordon Hayward during a game last season.

STEVE GRIFFIN | Tribune file photo

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# D-League Stars provide Jazz connection for players, fans

Parent club hopes to forge a closer connection with fans through its new affiliate.

By **STEVE LUHM**

*The Salt Lake Tribune*

**Taylorville »** Take it from Henry Sims.

The Jazz's decision to move their NBA Development League team from Boise to Salt Lake City this season will benefit players assigned to the Stars, whether it's for one game or all 48.

"It makes it more feasible for the players and coaches to stay in touch, back-and-forth," said Sims. "When you are miles away, it feels like the team is disconnected. When they are right down the street from each other, it feels more like the NBA team cares."

A 6-foot-10 center from Georgetown and former first-round draft pick, Sims has spent time in the D-League with the Canton Charge and Erie BayHawks. In Canton, the NBA affiliate was located next door in Cleveland. In Erie, the big-league club was 1,000 miles away in Orlando.

"There's kind of a big disconnect there," Sims said. "I'm sure [the Magic] were involved. I'm not saying they weren't. But it's a little more difficult when you are hundreds of miles away in Erie, Pa., as opposed to 15 or 20 minutes."

According to Sims, feeling like part of the NBA team "definitely added motivation" when he was in the D-League.

"... You see all the guys walking around the [practice] building and paying visits to your games," he said. "You can feel kind of forgotten, but you



FRANCISCO KJOLSETH | *The Salt Lake Tribune*

**Henry Sims appreciates having the Jazz's D-League affiliate in the same city as opposed to other organizations.**

know you're not."

Utah Jazz general manager Dennis Lindsey understands Sims' perspective and hopes the new setup will help his players.

"We always had a very good presence in Boise, from a management standpoint," Lindsey said. "But I'll be the first to admit it was not

necessarily me. So, from that standpoint, I'm excited."

Last April, the Jazz announced plans to relocate their D-League affiliate to Utah. One advantage, they said, was the opportunity to increase their connection with fans, who can now watch the team's young players develop for a fraction of the cost

of NBA games.

Season tickets for 24 home games are priced from \$78-\$450. Single-game tickets start at \$5.

The Stars open the season Nov. 12 at Sioux Falls. The home opener is Nov. 18 against the Northern Arizona Suns at Salt Lake Community College.

General manager Bart Sharp said, "I have been tasked to provide a family-friendly atmosphere at an affordable price."

Sharp hopes the Stars can draw 2,000-2,500 per game at the Lifetime Activities Center, which will have a capacity of 3,689 for D-League games.

"We have eliminated 1,000 seats so we can have a kids' zone," Sharp said.

Asked how ticket sales are going, he said, "We have been very well-received — very comparable to the other three new teams in the D-League."

Said coach Dean Cooper: "If we put a good product on the floor and our team plays hard, I think the fans will respond."

The Jazz believe fans unable to attend many games at Vivint Smart Home Arena in downtown Salt Lake will feel a closer connection to the franchise because of the D-League team's presence.

"One thing we can do is pull back the curtain a little bit and be more interactive with our fans," Lindsey said. "The stakes are so high during the [NBA] season that sometimes all of us get pent up."

"Just from an interaction standpoint, the Stars will allow us to do things we couldn't do before. ... We're hoping the setting at SLCC allows us to get some good touches with our fans."

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## Stars schedule

The Salt Lake City Stars' 2016-17 schedule. Home games are played at Salt Lake Community College. Times are Mountain:

### NOVEMBER

12-at Sioux Falls, 6 p.m.; 15-at Oklahoma City, 6 p.m.; 18-vs. Northern Arizona, 7 p.m.; 19-at Northern Arizona, 7 p.m.; 21-vs. Oklahoma City, 7 p.m.; 23-vs. Texas, 7 p.m.; 26-at Texas, 6:30 p.m.; 29-Northern Arizona, 7 p.m.

### DECEMBER

1-at Los Angeles, 8:30 p.m.; 3-at Austin, 6 p.m.; 5-at Rio Grande Valley, 6 p.m.; 11-at Sioux Falls, 4 p.m.; Dec. 16-Rio Grande Valley, 7 p.m.; Dec. 17-Rio Grande Valley, 7 p.m.; 20-Austin, 7 p.m.; 22-Texas, 7 p.m.; 30-Sioux Falls, 7 p.m.

### JANUARY

3-Oklahoma City, 7 p.m.; 6-Iowa, 7 p.m.; 7-Canton, 7 p.m.; 10-Austin, 7 p.m.; 11-Grand Rapids, 7 p.m.; 13-at Santa Cruz, 8 p.m.; 14-at Santa Cruz, 8 p.m.; 27-Santa Cruz, 7 p.m.; 29-at Reno, 6 p.m.

### FEBRUARY

1-at Northern Arizona, 6:30 p.m.; 3-at Reno, 8 p.m.; 4-Iowa, 7 p.m.; 6-Los Angeles, 7 p.m.; 8-Los Angeles, 11 a.m.; 23-at Iowa, 6 p.m.; 25-at Oklahoma City; 27-Windy City, 7 p.m.

### MARCH

3-at Texas, 6:30 p.m.; 5-at Austin, 2 p.m.; 8-Fort Wayne, 7 p.m.; 10-Raptors 905, 7 p.m.; 11-Sioux Falls, 7 p.m.; 15-at Erie, 5 p.m.; 17-at Delaware, 5 p.m.; 19-at Maine, 11 a.m.; 21-at Long Island; 23-at Greensboro, 5 p.m.; 25-at Rio Grande, 6 p.m.; 27-Santa Cruz, 7 p.m.; 31-Reno, 7 p.m.

### APRIL

1-at Los Angeles, 7:30 p.m.

## Games of note in the Jazz schedule

**Oct. 25** » at Portland, 8 p.m.  
**Oct. 28** » L.A. Lakers, 7 p.m.  
**Oct. 30** » at L.A. Clippers, 2:30 p.m.  
**Nov. 1** » at San Antonio, 6:30 p.m.

### **Nov. 2** » DALLAS, 7 P.M.

You can expect some extra boos after the Mavericks helped end the Jazz's playoff dreams last season. Plus, who knows how many chances you'll have left to watch Dirk Nowitzki fire off fadeaway jumpers?

**Nov. 4** » San Antonio, 7 p.m.  
**Nov. 6** » at N.Y. Knicks, 10 a.m.  
**Nov. 7** » at Philadelphia, 5 p.m.  
**Nov. 9** » at Charlotte, 5 p.m.  
**Nov. 11** » at Orlando, 5 p.m.  
**Nov. 12** » at Miami, 6 p.m.  
**Nov. 14** » Memphis, 7 p.m.  
**Nov. 17** » Chicago, 8:30 p.m.  
**Nov. 19** » at Houston, 3 p.m.  
**Nov. 20** » at Denver, 7 p.m.  
**Nov. 23** » Denver, 7 p.m.  
**Nov. 25** » Atlanta, 6 p.m.

### **Nov. 28** » AT MINNESOTA, 6 P.M.

With young stars in Minny — led by Karl-Anthony Towns and Andrew Wiggins — these games might be big-time playoff battles in the future.

**Nov. 29** » Houston, 7 p.m.  
**Dec. 1** » Miami, 7 p.m.  
**Dec. 3** » Denver, 7 p.m.  
**Dec. 5** » at L.A. Lakers, 8:30 p.m.  
**Dec. 6** » Phoenix, 7 p.m.

### **Dec. 8** » GOLDEN STATE, 7 P.M.

Steph Curry draws a crowd even during his warmups. Now with Kevin Durant on an already star-studded roster, the Warriors are a must-watch.

**Dec. 10** » Sacramento, 7 p.m.

### **Dec. 14** » OKLAHOMA CITY, 7 P.M.

Can the Jazz overtake a Durant-less OKC in the West? Either way, Russell Westbrook always puts on a show and former Jazzman Enes Kanter loves to play the heel for the fans who once cheered him.

**Dec. 16** » Dallas, 8:30 p.m.  
**Dec. 18** » at Memphis, 4 p.m.  
**Dec. 20** » at Golden State, 8:30 p.m.  
**Dec. 21** » Sacramento, 7 p.m.  
**Dec. 23** » Toronto, 7 p.m.  
**Dec. 27** » at L.A. Lakers, 8:30 p.m.  
**Dec. 29** » Philadelphia, 7 p.m.  
**Dec. 31** » Phoenix, 6 p.m.  
**Jan. 2** » at Brooklyn, 5:30 p.m.

### **Jan. 3** » AT BOSTON, 5:30 P.M.

Gordon Hayward's road reunions with his old college coach, Brad Stevens, have been hard-fought and entertaining. But after dropping close games in their past two trips to Boston, with one of them being a buzzer-beater, can Hayward finally get some revenge?

**Jan. 5** » at Toronto, 5:30 p.m.  
**Jan. 7** » at Minnesota, 6 p.m.

**Jan. 8** » at Memphis, 6 p.m.

### **Jan. 10** » CLEVELAND, 7 P.M.

Jazz fans will hope LeBron's bad luck in Salt Lake City will continue. James' teams have won just once in their past seven trips to Utah.

**Jan. 13** » Detroit, 8:30 p.m.  
**Jan. 14** » Orlando, 7 p.m.  
**Jan. 16** » at Phoenix, 7 p.m.  
**Jan. 20** » at Dallas, 6:30 p.m.  
**Jan. 21** » Indiana, 7 p.m.  
**Jan. 23** » Oklahoma City, 7 p.m.  
**Jan. 24** » at Denver, 7 p.m.  
**Jan. 26** » L.A. Lakers, 8:30 p.m.  
**Jan. 28** » Memphis, 7 p.m.  
**Feb. 1** » Milwaukee, 7 p.m.  
**Feb. 4** » Charlotte, 7 p.m.  
**Feb. 6** » at Atlanta, 5:30 p.m.  
**Feb. 8** » at New Orleans, 6 p.m.  
**Feb. 9** » at Dallas, 6:30 p.m.  
**Feb. 11** » Boston, 8 p.m.

### **Feb. 13** » L.A. CLIPPERS, 7 P.M.

Jazz fans vividly recall what the Clippers did last season during the stretch run.

**Feb. 15** » Portland, 7 p.m.  
**Feb. 24** » at Milwaukee, 6 p.m.  
**Feb. 26** » at Washington, 3 p.m.  
**Feb. 28** » at Oklahoma City, 6 p.m.  
**March 1** » Minnesota, 7 p.m.  
**March 3** » Brooklyn, 7 p.m.  
**March 5** » at Sacramento, 4 p.m.  
**March 6** » Atlanta, 7 p.m.  
**March 8** » at Houston, 6 p.m.  
**March 11** » at Oklahoma City, 1 p.m.  
**March 13** » L.A. Clippers, 7 p.m.  
**March 15** » at Detroit, 5:30 p.m.  
**March 16** » at Cleveland, 5 p.m.  
**March 18** » at Chicago, 7 p.m.  
**March 20** » at Indiana, 5 p.m.  
**March 22** » N.Y. Knicks, 8:30 p.m.  
**March 25** » at L.A. Clippers, 1:30 p.m.  
**March 27** » Atlanta, 8:30 p.m.  
**March 29** » at Sacramento, 8:30 p.m.

### **March 31** » WASHINGTON, 7 P.M.

Trey Burke returns for the first time since he was traded to the Wizards.

### **April 2** » AT SAN ANTONIO, 1:30 P.M.

The Jazz get some national TV love with a Sunday matinee game on ABC.

**April 4** » Portland, 8:30 p.m.

**April 7** » Minnesota, 7 p.m.

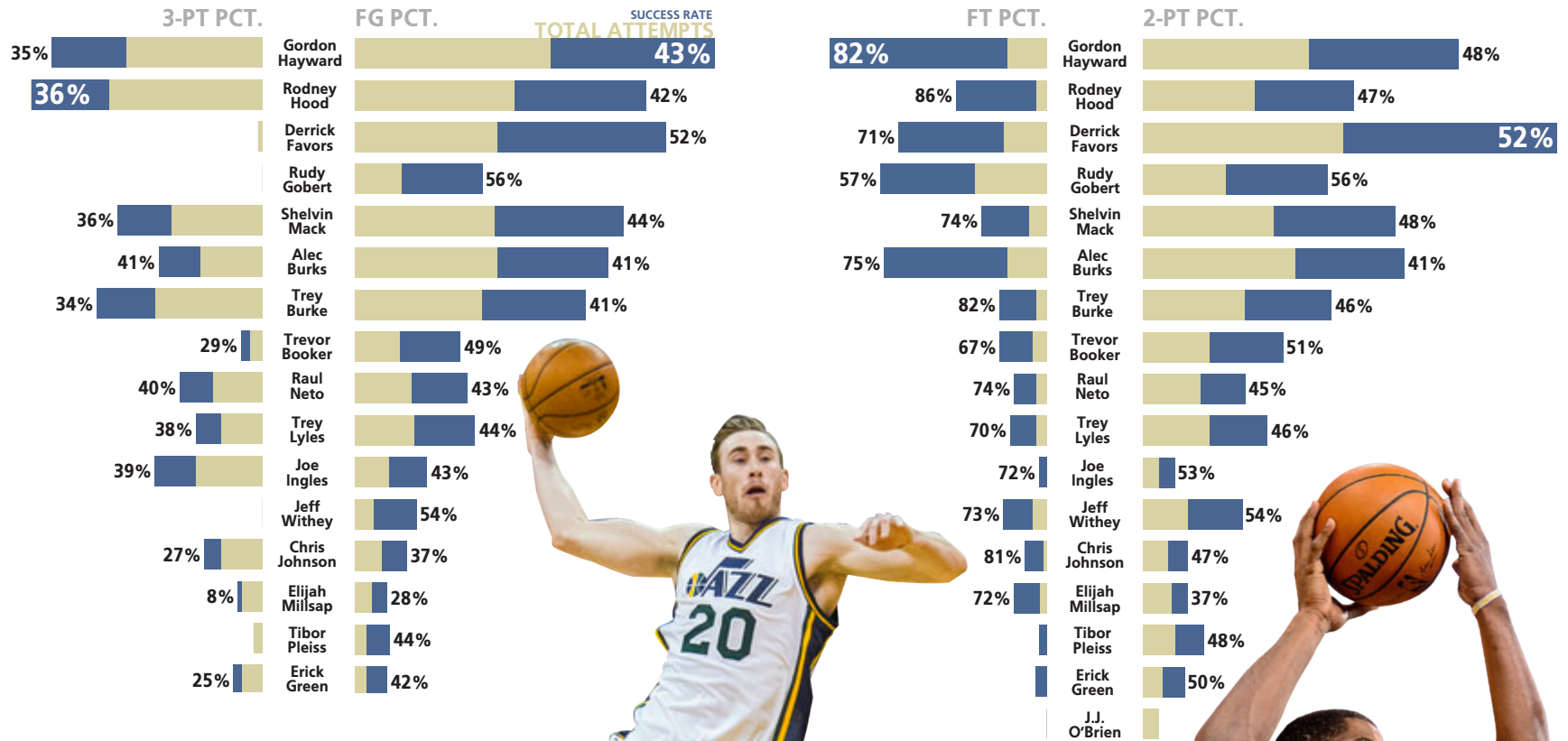
### **April 8** » AT PORTLAND, 8 P.M.

Whether they're fighting for a playoff spot or seeding, there should be a lot on the line when these two square off.

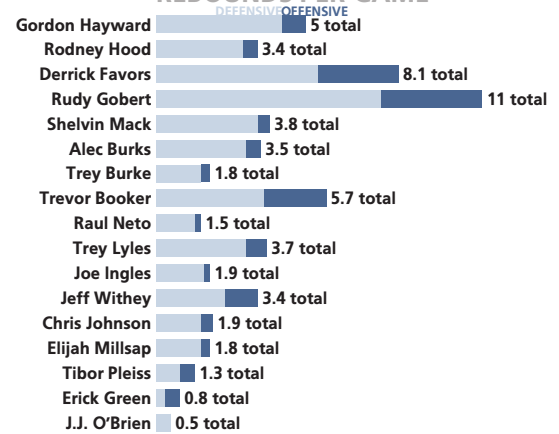
**April 10** » at Golden State, 8:30 p.m.

**April 12** » San Antonio, 8 p.m.

## JAZZ 2015-16 PER GAME STATISTICS

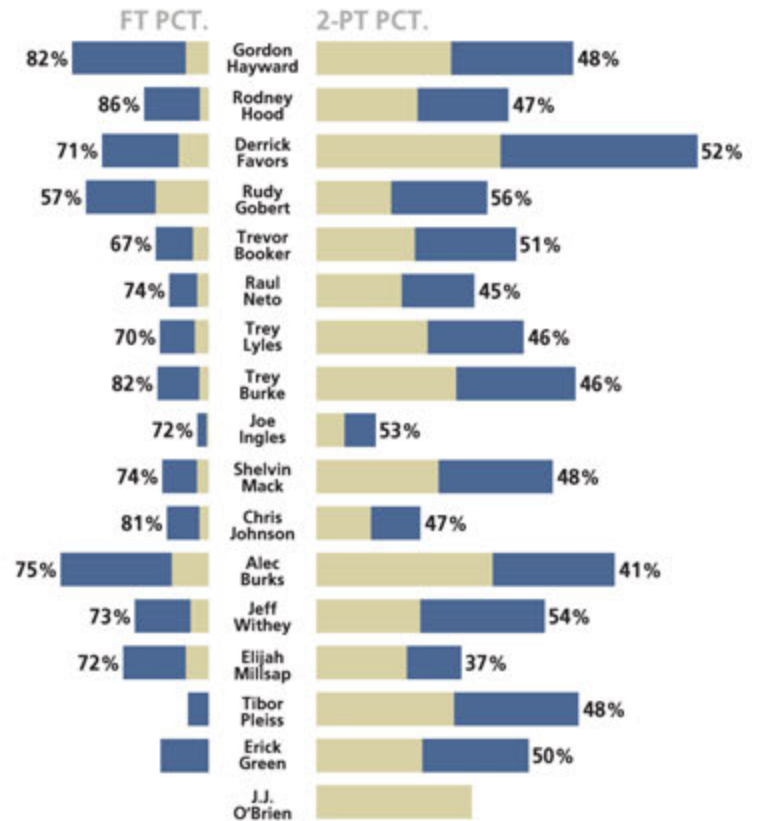
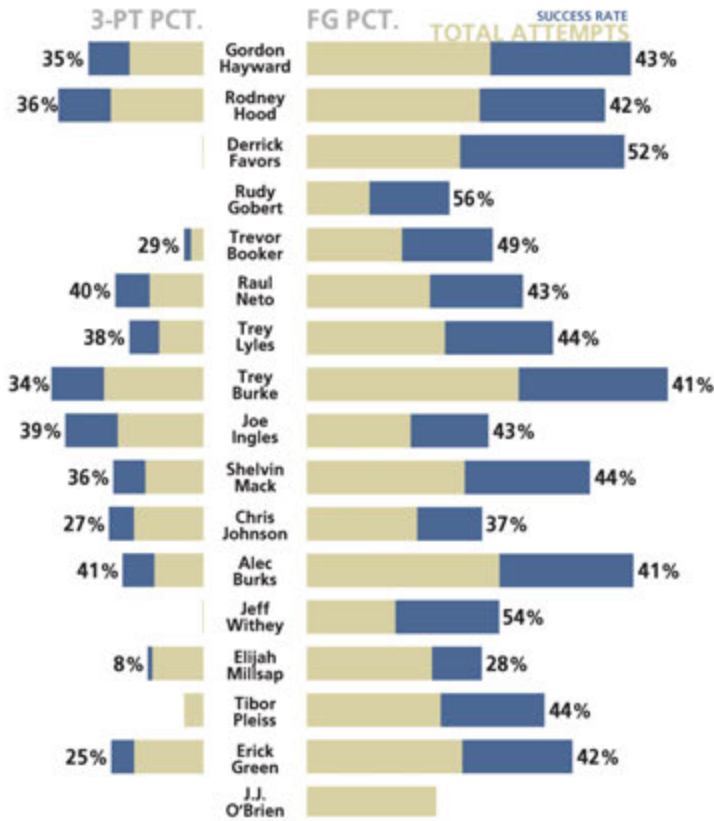


### REBOUNDS PER GAME

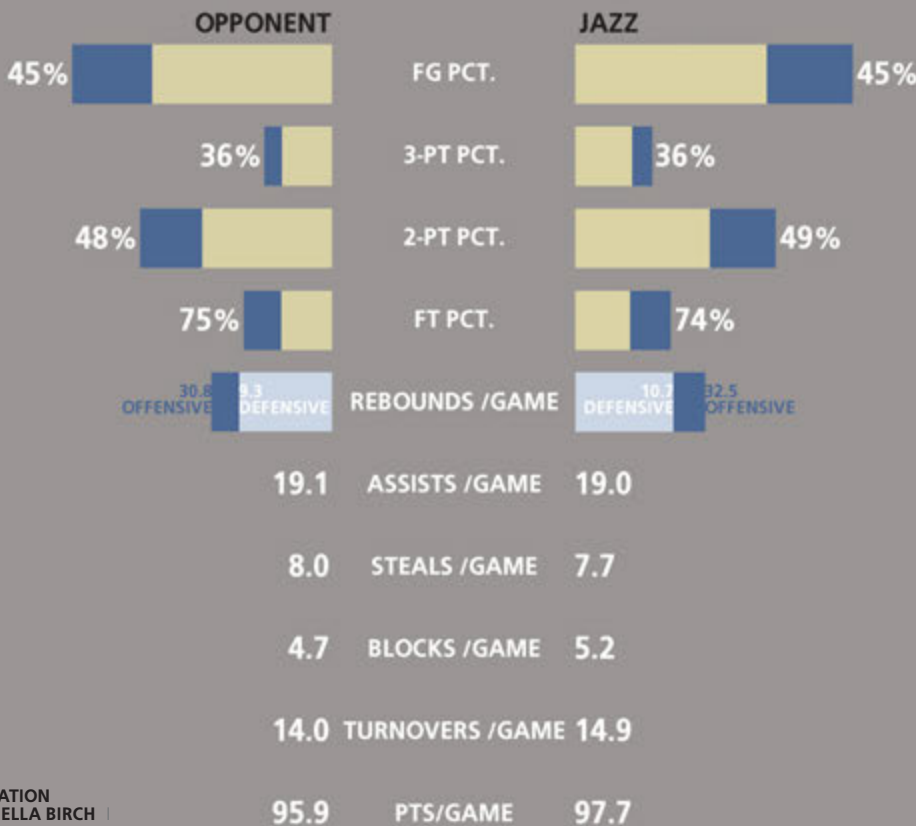


	Gordon Hayward	Rodney Hood	Derrick Favors	Rudy Gobert	Shelvin Mack	Alec Burks	Trey Burke	Trevor Booker	Raul Neto	Trey Lyles	Joe Ingles	Jeff Withey	Chris Johnson	Elijah Millsap	Tibor Pleiss	Erick Green	J.J. O'Brien
POINTS/GAME	19.7	14.5	16.4	9.1	12.7	13.3	10.6	5.9	5.9	6.1	4.2	4.3	2.9	1.8	2.0	2.2	0.0
ASSISTS	1.2	0.9	1.2	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.5
STEALS	0.3	0.2	1.5	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
BLOCKS	2.5	1.6	1.7	1.9	2.9	1.6	1.3	1.0	1.3	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.0	0.0
TURNOVERS	3.7	2.7	1.5	0.5	5.3	2.0	2.3	1.1	2.1	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.6	1.0	0.2	0.3	0.0

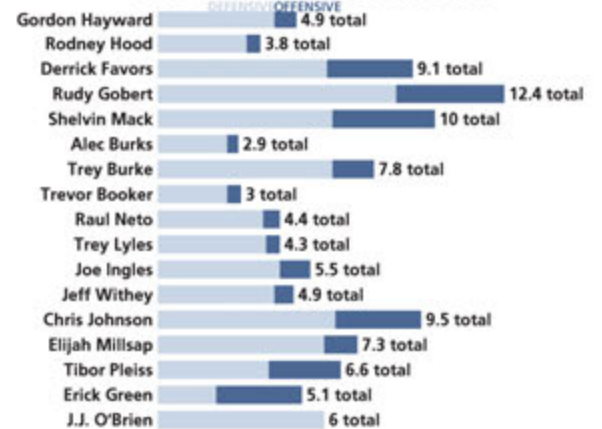
## PER 36 MINUTE STATISTICS



## OVERALL TEAM STATISTICS



### REBOUNDS PER 36 MINUTES



	Gordon Hayward	Rodney Hood	Derrick Favors	Rudy Gobert	Trevor Booker	Raul Neto	Trey Lyles	Trey Burke	Joe Ingles
POINTS/GAME	19.6	16.3	18.4	10.4	10.2	11.4	12.7	17.9	9.9
ASSISTS	1.2	1.0	1.3	0.8	1.3	1.5	0.7	0.9	1.6
STEALS	0.3	0.2	1.7	2.5	0.9	0.0	0.5	0.2	0.1
BLOCKS	2.5	1.8	1.9	2.1	1.8	2.6	1.7	2.1	1.9
TURNOVERS	3.7	3.0	1.7	1.7	1.9	4.2	1.5	3.9	2.8

	Shelvin Mack	Chris Johnson	Alec Burks	Jeff Withey	Elijah Millsap	Tibor Pleiss	Erick Green	J.J. O'Brien
POINTS/GAME	14.5	8.6	18.6	11.9	7.5	10.5	13.4	0.0
ASSISTS	1.1	1.3	0.8	1.1	1.5	0.4	1.0	6.0
STEALS	0.1	0.8	0.2	2.9	0.6	0.9	0.0	0.0
BLOCKS	3.3	1.7	2.3	1.5	1.9	3.5	0.0	0.0
TURNOVERS	6.1	1.9	2.8	1.1	4.0	0.9	2.1	0.0

## INSIDE THE NBA » BY TONY JONES



### Best Hair

#### JAMES HARDEN, ROCKETS

The beard is great. And a beard represents hair.



### Worst Hair

#### ANDERSON VAREJAO, WARRIORS

Straight outta Side-show Bob barbers.



### Best Arena

#### ORACLE ARENA, GOLDEN STATE

Great fans, and a renovation makes it a must visit (above).

### Worst Arena

#### VERIZON CENTER, WASHINGTON

Not a great ambiance for an NBA game.

### Best Flopper

#### CHRIS PAUL, CLIPPERS

Nobody gets away with more bogus calls than the point guard (below).



### Worst Flopper

#### ANDERSON VAREJAO, WARRIORS

Nobody gets laughed at more when he tries to draw a foul.



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Toughest player in the league

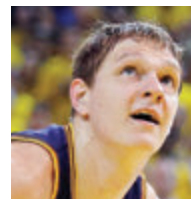
#### LEBRON JAMES, CAVALIERS

Anyone who can stand up to the social media trolling that Golden State fans were giving James last June in the NBA Finals, and respond by playing the three best games of his career and leading a comeback against a 73-win team for the title, is the definition of mentally tough.

### Softest player in the league

#### TIMOFEY MOZGOV, LAKERS

Good for him that the Lakers paid him a bunch of money. But his inability to catch a pass, finish around the rim or protect the rim will hamstring Los Angeles.



### Most Exciting

#### STEPHEN CURRY, WARRIORS

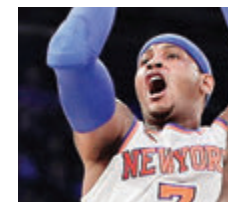
Every arena in the NBA draws a crowd to see this dude warm up pregame.



### Most Overrated

#### CARMELO ANTHONY, KNICKS

Scores a lot. Doesn't win a lot. Doesn't do a lot outside of scoring a lot.



### Most Underrated

#### GORDON HAYWARD, JAZZ

Is a 20-5-5 threat nightly, and a very good defender. And yet a faction of Jazz fans think this team would be better without him. Huh?



### Best Defender

#### DEANDRE JORDAN, CLIPPERS

He's amazing as a rim protector, and covers ground on the perimeter. The Clippers would be lost without him.



### Worst Defender

#### ENES KANTER, THUNDER

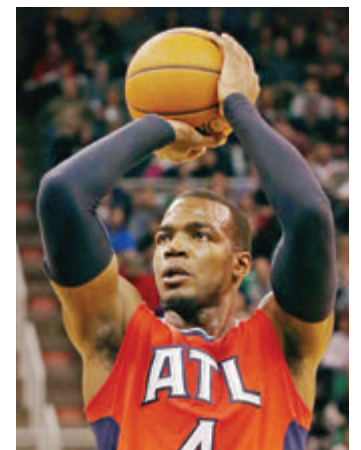
His offensive talent could make him a team's focal point. But a turnstile on defense.



### Most Boring

#### PAUL MILLSAP, HAWKS

No frills. No trash talk. No celebrations. Just cold, efficient basketball. And that's a good thing!





## INSIDE THE NBA » BY TONY JONES



### Best Shooter

#### STEPHEN CURRY, WARRIORS

If he keeps up this pace, he will be the best shooter in league history.



### Worst Shooter

#### TONY ALLEN, GRIZZLIES

Shows how good he is as a defender that he's been in the league for over a decade with the jumper he possesses.



### Best Name

#### GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO, BUCKS

Anytime announcers give you the nickname 'Alphabet,' you know it's pretty cool. It may take longer to say his full name than it does for him to get from one end of the court to the other.

### Worst Name

#### JASON SMITH, WIZARDS

Can you get a name that's any more dull?



### Fastest Player

#### RUSSELL WESTBROOK, THUNDER

If he ran the 100 meters at the Olympics, he would be a competitor.

### Slowest Player

#### ROY HIBBERT, HORNETS

Big ..... Roy ..... moves .... like ... a ..... glacier.



### Most Athletic

#### LEBRON JAMES, CAVALIERS

Can play all five positions. Is one of the fastest players in the league from end to end. Has an all-time great vertical jump.



### Least Athletic

#### PAUL PIERCE, CLIPPERS

This is more a testament to being able to stay in the league since 1998. Eventually, players lose it athletically. Pierce's skill set still makes him viable.

### Best Hands

#### AL JEFFERSON, PACERS

Big Al (below) catches everything.



### Worst Hands

#### OMER ASIK, PELICANS

We've seen better hands on snakes.



### Best Referee

#### DANNY CRAWFORD

Listens to players, lets coaches vent (above) and does it with respect while keeping control of every game he officiates.

### Worst Referee

#### MARC DAVIS

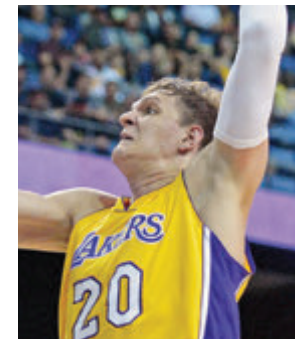
The polar opposite of Danny Crawford.



### Best value deal

#### STEPHEN CURRY, WARRIORS

One of the best players in the NBA is making \$11 million this year. Chew on that one.



### Worst value deal

#### TIMOFEY MOZGOV, LAKERS

Averaged six points and four rebounds per game in Cleveland, then got \$64 million in free agency. God bless America.

## NBA INSIDER TONY JONES' POWER RANKINGS »

### Western Conference

- Golden State Warriors** » Obvious choice. Some will call this team a failure if Stephen Curry (right) and Co. don't win 70 games.
- San Antonio Spurs** » Could go with the Clippers here, but the Spurs are still super good, even without Tim Duncan.
- Los Angeles Clippers** » With Blake Griffin a free agent next summer, this could be the last hurrah for the current core.
- Portland Trail Blazers** » This team is athletic and more versatile around Damian Lillard and C.J. McCollum than given credit for.
- Utah Jazz** » As deep and versatile a team as there is in the West outside of Golden State. Experience and health aren't there yet.
- Memphis Grizzlies** » Grit N'Grind returns with Mike Conley and Marc Gasol back and healthy.
- Houston Rockets** » Will be better than last season. Can be good enough to outperform this ranking.
- Dallas Mavericks** » Veteran guile will enable Dallas to hold off OKC for final postseason spot.
- Oklahoma City Thunder** » Russell Westbrook simply won't be enough after the departure of Kevin Durant.
- Minnesota Timberwolves** » Might be the last time in the draft lottery for this group.
- Denver Nuggets** » Very promising future, even if the West is too deep for now.
- Sacramento Kings** » Needs to figure out which direction the franchise is heading.
- Los Angeles Lakers** » Will be better than people think. D'Angelo Russell = future star.
- New Orleans Pelicans** » Very thin roster outside of Anthony Davis.
- Phoenix Suns** » Have young pieces and exciting future, but this year will be a struggle.



### Eastern Conference

- Cleveland Cavaliers** » If LeBron James (right) isn't playing in his eighth consecutive NBA Finals in June, it will be a major upset.
- Boston Celtics** » The only team in the East who can realistically give Cleveland a challenge.
- Toronto Raptors** » Flip a coin between them and the Indiana Pacers for this spot.
- Indiana Pacers** » Coin flipped. Much better offensively. Offseason additions will really help.
- Atlanta Hawks** » Can't count them out. They will still be good.
- Detroit Pistons** » A young core gets a year older. And a year better.
- Chicago Bulls** » Outside shooting, overall team fit, and usage are issues. But Wade/Butler/Rondo are a talented trio.
- Washington Wizards** » Wall and Beal are a tough combination ... if Beal can stay healthy.
- Charlotte Hornets** » Caught lightning in a bottle last year. Key pieces (Lin, Jefferson) have gone elsewhere.
- Milwaukee Bucks** » Lack of outside shooting, point guard issues, eventually derail promising postseason hopes.
- New York Knicks** » Porzingis is a future star. Rose, Noah and Anthony = the Eastern Conference 2011 all-star team.
- Miami Heat** » No Wade. No Bosh. No playoffs.
- Orlando Magic** » Franchise went in a different direction with its core. Is it for the better?
- Philadelphia 76ers** » There is a lot of hope. Philly isn't that far away.
- Brooklyn Nets** » Boston has the right to swap first-round picks, which it certainly will do, as Brooklyn's could be No. 1.



## NBA INSIDER TONY JONES' PLAYOFF PREDICTIONS »

West First Round	West Semifinals	West Finals	East Finals	East Semifinals	East First Round
1. <b>GOLDEN STATE (4-0)</b>					1. <b>CLEVELAND (4-1)</b>
8. <b>DALLAS</b>	1. <b>GOLDEN STATE (4-2)</b>			1. <b>CLEVELAND (4-1)</b>	8. <b>WASHINGTON</b>
4. <b>PORTLAND (4-3)</b>	4. <b>PORTLAND</b>			5. <b>ATLANTA</b>	4. <b>INDIANA</b>
5. <b>UTAH</b>		1. <b>GOLDEN STATE (4-2)</b>	1. <b>CLEVELAND (4-2)</b>		5. <b>ATLANTA (4-3)</b>
3. <b>L.A. CLIPPERS</b>		2. <b>SAN ANTONIO</b>	2. <b>BOSTON</b>		3. <b>TORONTO (4-3)</b>
6. <b>MEMPHIS (4-3)</b>	6. <b>MEMPHIS</b>			3. <b>TORONTO</b>	6. <b>DETROIT (4-3)</b>
2. <b>SAN ANTONIO (4-2)</b>	2. <b>SAN ANTONIO (4-1)</b>			2. <b>BOSTON (4-3)</b>	2. <b>BOSTON (4-3)</b>
7. <b>HOUSTON</b>					7. <b>CHICAGO</b>

**NBA FINALS**  
Golden State  
defeats Cleveland 4-2

## In Horford, Celtics get the star they've sought



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### He's not Kevin Durant, but ...

OK, so Boston wasn't able to trade its hefty stash of draft picks for an established star, and they struck out on Kevin Durant in free agency. But prying **AL HORFORD** (right) away from Atlanta was not a bad consolation prize. His career stats aren't eye-popping (14.3 ppg, 8.9 rpg, 1.2 bpg, 53 FG%), but his rim-protection and solid outside shooting have already made the four-time All-Star a good fit in the Celtics' lineup.

### The biggest little man

**ISAIAH THOMAS** (above) has done alright for himself considering he was the 60th and final selection of the 2011 NBA Draft and a castoff of the Sacramento Kings. Though he remains a bit of a shameless gunner (42.8 FG%, 35.9 3% on 5.7 3-point attempts per game last season), he was the engine that made the team run, thanks to a career-high 22.2 ppg.

### Supporting cast in question

While **JARED SULLINGER**'s departure became fait accompli after Horford signed, the exit of do-it-all wing **EVAN TURNER** leaves a hole to fill on offense. **AVERY BRADLEY** has expressed a willingness to take on an additional scoring load, while **MARCUS SMART** must take on more ball-handling duties. It remains to be seen how much of a role No. 3 pick **JAYLEN BROWN** will play.

—Eric Walden



### CELTICS ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Avery Bradley	G	6-2	180	Texas
Kelly Olynyk	F	7-0	238	Gonzaga
Isaiah Thomas	G	5-9	185	Washington
Marcus Smart	G	6-4	220	Oklahoma St.
James Young	G	6-6	215	Kentucky
Terry Rozier	G	6-2	190	Louisville
R.J. Hunter	G	6-5	185	Georgia State
Jae Crowder	F	6-6	235	Marquette
Jonas Jerebko	F	6-10	231	Sweden
Amir Johnson	F	6-9	240	Westchester HS
Jordan Mickey	F	6-8	235	LSU
Al Horford	F	6-10	245	Florida
Jaylen Brown	F	6-7	225	California
Demetrius Jackson	G	6-1	201	Notre Dame
Gerald Green	G-F	6-7	205	Gulf Shores HS
Ben Bentil	F	6-9	235	Providence
Tyler Zeller	C	7-0	253	North Carolina
Marcus Georges-Hunt	G	6-5	216	Georgia Tech
Damion Lee	G	6-6	210	Louisville
Jalen Jones	G	6-7	223	Texas A&M

Head Coach » Brad Stevens

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MP	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Isaiah Thomas	82	32.2	.428	.359	.871	3.0	6.2	1.1	0.1	2.7	2.0	22.2
Avery Bradley	76	33.4	.447	.361	.780	2.9	2.1	1.5	0.3	1.4	2.2	15.2
Jae Crowder	73	31.6	.443	.336	.820	5.1	1.8	1.7	0.5	1.1	2.7	14.2
Evan Turner	81	28.0	.456	.241	.827	4.9	4.4	1.0	0.3	2.1	1.7	10.5
Jared Sullinger	81	23.6	.435	.282	.640	8.3	2.3	0.9	0.6	1.3	2.6	10.3
Kelly Olynyk	69	20.2	.455	.405	.750	4.1	1.5	0.8	0.5	1.1	2.4	10.0
Marcus Smart	61	27.3	.348	.253	.777	4.2	3.0	1.5	0.3	1.3	3.0	9.1
Amir Johnson	79	22.8	.585	.233	.570	6.4	1.7	0.7	1.1	1.2	2.7	7.3
David Lee	30	15.7	.453	.000	.784	4.3	1.8	0.4	0.4	1.3	1.7	7.1
Tyler Zeller	60	11.8	.476	—	.815	3.0	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.8	1.6	6.1
Jonas Jerebko	78	15.1	.413	.398	.782	3.7	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.7	1.8	4.4
R.J. Hunter	36	8.8	.367	.302	.857	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.8	2.7
Terry Rozier	39	8.0	.274	.222	.800	1.6	0.9	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.6	1.8
Coty Clarke	3	2.0	.500	1.000	—	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	2.0
Jordan Mickey	16	3.6	.364	—	.500	0.8	0.1	0.0	0.7	0.1	0.3	1.3
James Young	29	6.9	.306	.231	.250	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.6	1.0

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Isaiah Thomas	.428	.359	.871	3.3	6.9	1.2	0.1	3.0	2.3	24.8
Avery Bradley	.447	.361	.780	3.1	2.2	1.7	0.3	1.5	2.3	16.4
Jae Crowder	.443	.336	.820	5.8	2.1	2.0	0.5	1.3	3.1	16.2
Evan Turner	.456	.241	.827	6.3	5.7	1.3	0.4	2.7	2.2	13.5
Jared Sullinger	.435	.282	.640	12.7	3.5	1.4	0.9	1.9	3.9	15.7
Kelly Olynyk	.455	.405	.750	7.3	2.7	1.3	0.9	1.9	4.2	17.7
Marcus Smart	.348	.253	.777	5.5	4.0	2.0	0.4	1.7	4.0	12.1
Amir Johnson	.585	.233	.570	10.1	2.8	1.0	1.7	1.9	4.3	11.5
David Lee	.453	.000	.784	10.0	4.1	0.9	1.0	2.9	3.9	16.4
Tyler Zeller	.476	—	.815	9.0	1.5	0.5	1.1	2.3	4.9	18.5
Jonas Jerebko	.413	.398	.782	8.8	1.9	0.6	0.7	1.6	4.2	10.4
R.J. Hunter	.367	.302	.857	4.2	1.5	1.6	0.5	1.3	3.3	11.1
Terry Rozier	.274	.222	.800	7.3	4.3	0.7	0.1	2.2	2.7	8.3
Coty Clarke	.500	1.000	—	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	36.0
Jordan Mickey	.364	—	.500	8.2	0.6	0.0	0.9	0.6	3.2	13.3
James Young	.306	.231	.250	4.7	1.6	1.1	0.2	0.9	3.1	5.2

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS

48	40	41	39
2015-16, lost in first round of playoffs	2014-15, lost in first round of playoffs	2012-13, lost in first round of playoffs	2011-12, lost in East Conference finals
	25		
	2013-14		

66-game schedule, lockout season

## Past Lopez and Lin, Nets just don't have much



PHOTO CREDIT | The Associated Press

### Linsanity, Part 2?

If **JEREMY LIN** (right) is ever going to recapture the magic he had during that still-unbelievable run as a Knick, it'll be this season. True, he put up modest numbers as a backup in Charlotte last season (11.7 ppg, 3.0 apg, 41.2 FG%), but as the biggest offseason acquisition for a team widely projected to be the worst in the league this year, the point guard figures to get more offensive opportunities than anyone on the Nets save **BROOK LOPEZ** (above).

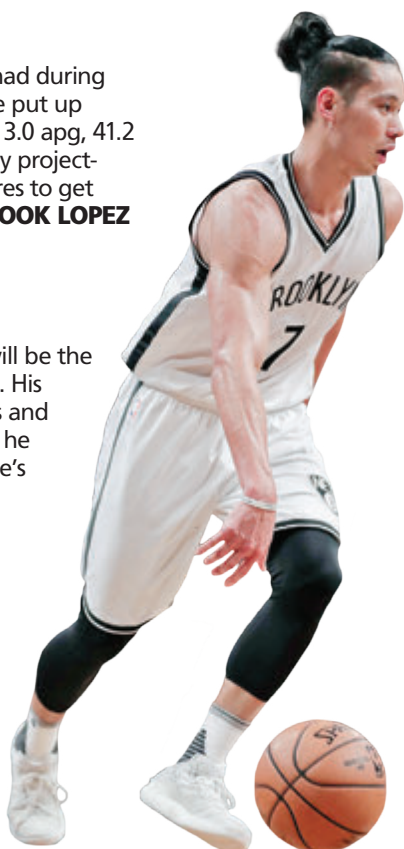
### A single shining star

Unless Lin surprises by flourishing in an expanded role, Lopez will be the closest thing there is to a one-man band in the NBA this season. His 20.6 ppg last season were a career-high, and while his rebounds and blocks remain generally lackluster for a 7-footer, the 7.8 and 1.7 he averaged in those respective categories were among the best he's ever produced.

### Island of misfit toys

Surely, first-year head coach **KENNY ATKINSON**'s dream scenario didn't involve taking over a group with one legit star (Lopez), a few wily veterans who'll get minutes by default (Lin, **TREVOR BOOKER**, **LUIS SCOLA**, **RANDY FOYE**), a handful of young first-rounders with injury issues (**RONDAE HOLLIS-JEFFERSON**, **CHRIS MCCULLOUGH**, **CARIS LEVERT**) and some washout former lottery picks (**ANTHONY BENNETT**, **JOE HARRIS**). At least Bosnian sharpshooter **BOJAN BOGDANOVIC** looks promising.

— Eric Walden



### NETS ROSTER

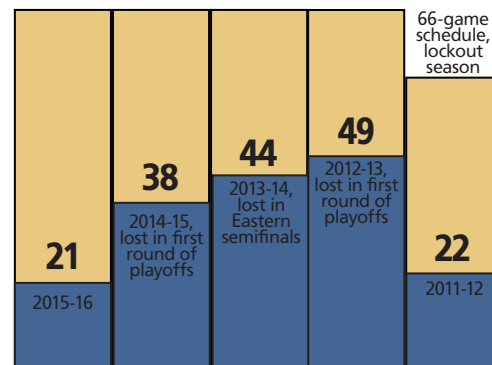
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Bojan Bogdanovic	F	6-8	216	Bosnia
Rondae Hollis-Jefferson	F	6-7	220	Arizona
Chris McCullough	F	6-11	200	Syracuse
Brook Lopez	C	7-0	275	Stanford
Sean Kilpatrick	G	6-4	210	Cincinnati
Jeremy Lin	G	6-3	200	Harvard
Trevor Booker	F	6-8	228	Clemson
Isaiah Whitehead	G	6-4	210	Seton Hall
Luis Scola	F	6-9	240	Argentina
Greivis Vasquez	G	6-6	217	Maryland
Justin Hamilton	C	7-0	260	LSU
Randy Foye	G	6-4	213	Villanova
Caris LeVert	G	6-7	205	Michigan
Anthony Bennett	F	6-8	245	UNLV
Joe Harris	G	6-6	219	Virginia
Yogi Ferrell	G	6-0	180	Indiana
Beau Beech	F	6-9	215	North Florida
Egudijus Mockevicius	F	6-10	237	Evansville
Chase Budinger	F	6-7	209	Arizona
Jorge Gutierrez	G	6-3	191	California
<b>Head Coach »</b> Kenny Atkinson				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Player	G	MP	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Brook Lopez	73	33.7	.511	.143	.787	7.8	2.0	0.8	1.7	2.4	2.9	20.6
Thaddeus Young	73	33.0	.514	.233	.644	9.0	1.8	1.5	0.5	1.9	2.5	15.1
Sean Kilpatrick	23	23.2	.462	.361	.898	2.2	1.1	0.4	0.1	1.2	1.3	13.8
Jarrett Jack	32	32.1	.391	.304	.893	4.3	7.4	1.1	0.2	2.9	2.4	12.8
Joe Johnson	57	33.9	.406	.371	.852	3.9	4.1	0.7	0.0	2.0	1.8	11.8
Bojan Bogdanovic	79	26.8	.433	.382	.833	3.2	1.3	0.4	0.1	1.5	1.5	11.2
Wayne Ellington	76	21.3	.389	.358	.857	2.3	1.1	0.6	0.1	0.6	1.1	7.7
Shane Larkin	78	22.4	.442	.361	.776	2.3	4.4	1.2	0.2	1.9	1.6	7.3
Donald Sloan	61	21.6	.440	.384	.750	2.8	4.4	0.5	0.1	1.3	1.2	7.0
Andrea Bargnani	46	13.8	.455	.188	.825	2.1	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.6	1.3	6.6
Henry Sims	14	18.8	.429	—	.833	5.1	0.6	0.6	1.0	0.9	2.6	6.5
Markel Brown	62	15.8	.394	.314	.755	2.0	1.5	0.6	0.2	0.9	1.5	5.9
Rondae Hollis-Jefferson	29	21.2	.457	.286	.712	5.3	1.5	1.3	0.6	0.9	2.1	5.8
Chris McCullough	24	15.1	.404	.362	.478	2.8	0.4	1.2	0.5	0.6	1.6	4.7
Willie Reed	39	10.9	.571	—	.545	3.1	0.3	0.2	0.8	0.4	1.2	4.7
Thomas Robinson	71	12.9	.447	.000	.431	5.1	0.6	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.6	4.3
Sergey Karasev	40	10.0	.405	.297	.929	1.5	0.9	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.7	2.4

Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Brook Lopez	.511	.143	.787	8.4	2.2	0.8	1.8	2.6	3.2	22.0
Thaddeus Young	.514	.233	.644	9.9	2.0	1.7	0.6	2.0	2.7	16.5
Sean Kilpatrick	.462	.361	.898	3.4	1.8	0.7	0.1	1.8	2.0	21.4
Jarrett Jack	.391	.304	.893	4.8	8.3	1.2	0.2	3.3	2.7	14.4
Joe Johnson	.406	.371	.852	4.2	4.3	0.7	0.0	2.2	1.9	12.5
Bojan Bogdanovic	.433	.382	.833	4.3	1.7	0.5	0.1	2.0	2.0	15.1
Wayne Ellington	.389	.358	.857	3.9	1.9	1.1	0.1	1.0	1.8	13.1
Shane Larkin	.442	.361	.776	3.7	7.0	2.0	0.2	3.0	2.5	11.6
Donald Sloan	.440	.384	.750	4.7	7.3	0.9	0.1	2.2	2.0	11.6
Andrea Bargnani	.455	.188	.825	5.5	1.0	0.2	0.5	1.5	3.5	17.3
Henry Sims	.429	—	.833	9.9	1.2	1.2	1.9	1.6	5.1	12.5
Markel Brown	.394	.314	.755	4.5	3.3	1.4	0.5	2.0	3.4	13.3
Rondae Hollis-Jefferson	.457	.286	.712	9.0	2.5	2.3	0.9	1.5	3.6	9.8
Chris McCullough	.404	.362	.478	6.8	0.9	2.8	1.2	1.5	3.9	11.1
Willie Reed	.571	—	.545	10.3	0.8	0.5	2.5	1.4	4.0	15.4
Thomas Robinson	.447	.000	.431	14.1	1.8	1.5	1.4	2.7	4.4	12.1
Sergey Karasev	.405	.297	.929	5.2	3.2	0.5	0.2	2.0	2.4	8.8

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Knicks roll dice giving big roles to Rose, Noah



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### A good backup plan

Bringing in **DERRICK ROSE** (above) as the point guard for new coach **JEFF HORNACEK**'s hybrid-triangle offense seemed a curious fit from the start. His ability to pick it up is even more in question given his time away from the team due to a civil trial for rape. That makes **BRANDON JENNINGS'** role perhaps even more significant. Though he averaged 6.9 ppg last year in an injury-ravaged season, he has career marks of 15.5 ppg and 5.9 apg.

### Frontcourt of intrigue

If judged solely on name recognition, the Knicks' frontcourt of **JOAKIM NOAH**, **CARMELO ANTHONY** and **KRISTAPS PORZINGIS** (right) would be among the best in the league. There are questions, though. Does Noah have anything left? He averaged 4.3 ppg and 8.8 rpg while limited to 29 games last season. Anthony's 21.8 ppg were his fewest since his second season. And while Porzingis has tons of promise, his 42.1 FG% is troubling for a man who stands 7-foot-3.

### How shallow of them

While the Knicks' starting lineup got a big makeover thanks to Rose, Noah and guard **COURTNEY LEE**, Jennings was the only significant bench addition (though there is hope that Spanish big man **WILLY HERNANGOMEZ** can be an instant contributor). Still, with so many injury-prone players in key roles, there just isn't much depth.

—Eric Walden



### KNICKS ROSTER

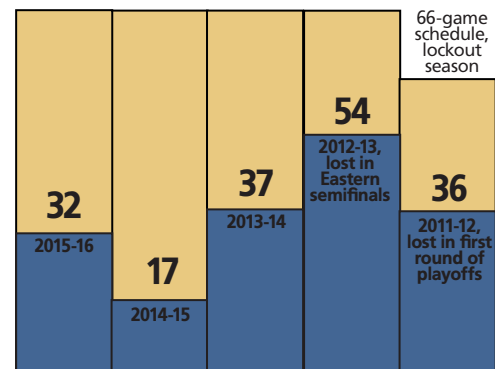
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Derrick Rose	G	6-3	190	Memphis
Carmelo Anthony	F	6-8	240	Syracuse
Kristaps Porzingis	F	7-3	240	Latvia
Kyle O'Quinn	C	6-10	250	Norfolk State
Justin Holiday	G	6-6	185	Washington
Mindaugas Kuzminskas	F	6-9	216	Lithuania
Marshall Plumlee	C	7-0	250	Duke
Joakim Noah	C	6-11	232	Florida
Courtney Lee	G	6-5	200	W. Kentucky
Lance Thomas	F	6-8	235	Duke
Brandon Jennings	G	6-1	169	Oak Hill Aca.
Sasha Vujacic	G	6-7	195	Slovenia
Maurice Ndour	F	6-9	200	Ohio
Willy Hernangomez	C	6-11	243	Spain
Ron Baker	G	6-3	220	Wichita State
J.P. Tokoto	G	6-6	200	North Carolina
Chasson Randle	G	6-2	185	Stanford
Lou Amundson	F	6-9	220	UNLV
<b>Head Coach »</b>				Jeff Hornacek

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	Player	G	MP	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Carmelo Anthony	72	35.1	434	.339	.829	7.7	4.2	0.9	0.5	2.4	2.5	21.8	
Kristaps Porzingis	72	28.4	421	.333	.838	7.3	1.3	0.7	1.9	1.7	2.8	14.3	
Arron Afflalo	71	33.4	443	.382	.840	3.7	2.0	0.4	0.1	1.2	2.0	12.8	
Robin Lopez	82	27.1	539	.000	.795	7.3	1.4	0.2	1.6	1.6	2.2	10.3	
Derrick Williams	80	17.9	450	.293	.758	3.7	0.9	0.4	0.1	0.8	0.9	9.3	
Lance Thomas	59	22.3	442	.404	.857	2.2	0.9	0.4	0.1	1.0	1.8	8.2	
Jose Calderon	72	28.1	459	.414	.875	3.2	4.2	0.9	0.1	1.2	1.9	7.6	
Langston Galloway	82	24.8	393	.344	.754	3.5	2.5	0.9	0.3	0.7	2.2	7.6	
Jerian Grant	76	16.6	394	.220	.780	1.9	2.3	0.7	0.1	1.1	1.3	5.6	
Sasha Vujacic	61	14.9	383	.364	.821	2.4	1.4	0.6	0.1	0.7	1.4	4.9	
Kyle O'Quinn	65	11.8	476	.227	.767	3.8	1.1	0.3	0.8	0.9	1.6	4.8	
Kevin Seraphin	48	11.0	410	.000	.826	2.6	1.0	0.2	0.8	0.9	1.4	3.9	
T. Antetokounmpo	2	3.0	750	.000	—	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	3.0	
Jimmer Fredette	2	2.5	1,000	1.000	.800	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	3.5	
Cleanthony Early	17	9.1	300	.267	.750	1.5	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.9	1.8	
Lou Amundson	29	7.0	358	—	.519	1.7	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.5	1.5	1.8	

Per 36 Minutes	Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Carmelo Anthony	.434	.339	.829	7.9	4.3	0.9	0.5	2.5	2.6	22.4	
Kristaps Porzingis	.421	.333	.838	9.3	1.6	0.9	2.4	2.1	3.6	18.1	
Arron Afflalo	.443	.382	.840	4.0	2.2	0.4	0.2	1.2	2.2	13.8	
Robin Lopez	.539	.000	.795	9.8	1.8	0.3	2.1	2.2	3.0	13.7	
Derrick Williams	.450	.293	.758	7.4	1.9	0.7	0.2	1.5	1.7	18.7	
Lance Thomas	.442	.404	.857	3.6	1.5	0.6	0.2	1.6	3.0	13.3	
Jose Calderon	.459	.414	.875	.1	5.3	1.1	0.1	1.5	2.4	9.7	
Langston Galloway	.393	.344	.754	5.1	3.7	1.4	0.4	1.1	3.1	11.1	
Jerian Grant	.394	.220	.780	4.1	5.0	1.4	0.3	2.5	2.8	12.1	
Sasha Vujacic	.383	.364	.821	5.9	3.3	1.3	0.2	1.7	3.3	11.7	
Kyle O'Quinn	.476	.227	.767	11.8	3.4	0.9	2.3	2.9	5.0	14.6	
Kevin Seraphin	.410	.000	.826	8.6	3.2	0.5	2.5	2.9	4.6	12.8	
T. Antetokounmpo	.750	.000	—	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	36.0	
Jimmer Fredette	1.000	1.000	.800	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.2	7.2	50.4	
Cleanthony Early	.300	.267	.750	6.1	1.4	0.5	0.7	2.1	3.7	7.2	
Lou Amundson	.358	—	.519	8.6	2.1	1.1	1.2	2.6	7.8	9.2	

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Simmons' injury aside, Sixers have good vibes



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Cursed? Or punished by the basketball gods?

Philadelphia's old team, the Warriors, won 26 more games last season alone than Philadelphia's newer franchise, the Sixers, have won the past three combined. But last year's 10-win abomination was worth it to get **BEN SIMMONS**, right? Well, Simmons (right) and his franchise-transforming talent are now on the shelf due to a broken foot. Given that fellow lottery picks **JAHILIL OKAFOR** (knee), **JOEL EMBIID** (feet) and **NERLENS NOEL** (knee) have all had significant injuries, some fans claim the team is cursed. Perhaps the hoops gods are having their final say on "The Process."

### Someone's gotta go

Given that the 76ers do have so many lottery-pick big men (**DARIO SARIC** also makes his debut this season after two years spent in Spain), at least one is likely to be dealt this year. Okafor (top) seems the consensus candidate. Why, though, since he averaged 17.5 ppg and 7.0 rpg? Well, Philly allowing 110 points per 100 possessions with him on the floor might be the reason.

### A new hope

Philadelphia's got work to do, and Simmons missing a few months puts a damper on things. But there's a more optimistic vibe to the franchise. Part of that is new general manager **BRYAN COLANGELO**, part is Simmons' arrival, and part is at long last getting to see what Embiid can do.

—Eric Walden



### 76ERS ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Nerlens Noel	F-C	6-11	228	Kentucky
Hollis Thompson	G-F	6-8	206	Georgetown
Nik Stauskas	G	6-6	205	Michigan
Joel Embiid	C	7-0	250	Kansas
Jerami Grant	F	6-8	210	Syracuse
Robert Covington	F	6-9	215	Tennessee St.
Jahlil Okafor	C	6-11	275	Duke
Richaun Holmes	F	6-10	245	Bowling Green
T.J. McConnell	G	6-2	200	Arizona
Gerald Henderson	G	6-5	215	Duke
Ben Simmons	F	6-10	240	LSU
Timothe Luwawu	F	6-6	205	France
Sergio Rodriguez	G	6-3	176	Spain
Dario Saric	F	6-10	223	Croatia
Jerryd Bayless	G	6-3	200	Arizona
Shawn Long	F	6-9	255	La.-Lafayette
James Webb	F	6-9	202	Boise State
Brandon Paul	G	6-4	200	Illinois
Elton Brand	F	6-8	275	Duke
Cat Barber	G	6-2	190	N.C. State

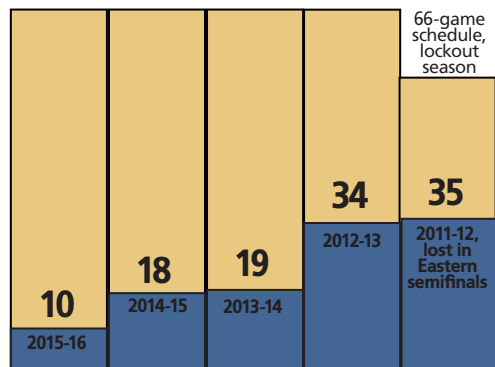
Head Coach » Brett Brown

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Jahlil Okafor	53	30.0	.508	.167	.686	7.0	1.2	0.4	1.2	2.3	2.6	17.5
Ish Smith	50	32.4	.405	.336	.669	4.3	7.0	1.3	0.4	2.6	1.9	14.7
Robert Covington	67	28.4	.385	.353	.791	6.3	1.4	1.6	0.6	2.1	3.5	12.8
Nerlens Noel	67	29.3	.521	.500	.590	8.1	1.8	1.8	1.5	2.4	2.9	11.1
Isaiah Canaan	77	25.5	.360	.363	.833	2.3	1.8	0.7	0.2	1.2	1.7	11.0
Hollis Thompson	77	28.0	.397	.380	.719	3.5	1.3	0.5	0.3	1.0	2.4	9.8
Carl Landry	36	15.8	.556	.462	.736	4.1	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.6	1.9	9.8
Jerami Grant	77	26.8	.419	.240	.658	4.7	1.8	0.7	1.6	1.4	2.8	9.7
Nik Stauskas	73	24.8	.385	.326	.771	2.5	1.9	0.6	0.3	1.3	1.6	8.5
Tony Wroten	8	18.0	.338	.176	.541	2.6	2.5	0.4	0.0	3.6	1.4	8.4
T.J. McConnell	81	19.8	.470	.348	.634	3.1	4.5	1.2	0.1	1.7	1.4	6.1
Richaun Holmes	51	13.8	.514	.182	.689	2.6	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.6	1.8	5.6
JaKarr Sampson	47	14.7	.426	.176	.639	2.7	0.6	0.2	0.3	1.1	1.9	5.1
Elton Brand	17	13.2	.431	.000	.889	3.7	1.1	0.5	0.5	0.6	1.9	4.1
Kendall Marshall	30	13.3	.364	.327	.692	0.9	2.4	0.5	0.1	1.4	1.0	3.7
Phil Pressey	14	12.1	.382	.308	.500	1.6	3.3	0.8	0.1	1.4	1.0	3.9
Christian Wood	17	8.5	.415	.364	.619	2.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.6	3.6
Sonny Weems	7	11.1	.333	.222	.500	1.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.6	1.0	2.4

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Jahlil Okafor	.508	.167	.686	8.4	1.5	0.5	1.4	2.8	3.2	21.0
Ish Smith	.405	.336	.669	4.7	7.7	1.4	0.4	2.9	2.1	16.3
Robert Covington	.385	.353	.791	7.9	1.8	2.0	0.8	2.7	4.4	16.2
Nerlens Noel	.521	.500	.590	9.9	2.2	2.2	1.8	2.9	3.5	13.7
Isaiah Canaan	.360	.363	.833	3.2	2.5	1.0	0.2	1.7	2.4	15.5
Hollis Thompson	.397	.380	.719	4.5	1.7	0.6	0.4	1.3	3.1	12.7
Carl Landry	.556	.462	.736	9.2	2.0	0.8	0.6	1.4	4.4	22.2
Jerami Grant	.419	.240	.658	6.3	2.4	0.9	2.2	1.9	3.7	13.1
Nik Stauskas	.385	.326	.771	3.6	2.7	0.9	0.4	1.9	2.3	12.3
Tony Wroten	.338	.176	.541	5.2	5.0	0.7	0.0	7.2	2.7	16.7
T.J. McConnell	.470	.348	.634	5.6	8.2	2.1	0.2	3.1	2.6	11.1
Richaun Holmes	.514	.182	.689	6.9	1.7	1.0	2.1	1.6	4.7	14.7
JaKarr Sampson	.426	.176	.639	6.7	1.6	0.6	0.8	2.7	4.7	12.5
Elton Brand	.431	.000	.889	10.1	2.9	1.4	1.3	1.8	5.1	11.2
Kendall Marshall	.364	.327	.692	2.5	6.6	1.4	0.2	3.9	2.7	10.0
Phil Pressey	.382	.308	.500	4.9	9.7	2.3	0.2	4.0	3.0	11.6
Christian Wood	.415	.364	.619	9.4	0.7	1.2	1.7	0.5	2.7	15.1
Sonny Weems	.333	.222	.500	5.5	0.9	0.0	0.0	1.8	3.2	7.8

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Raptors' star backcourt could use a little help



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Olympic hangover?

Guards **KYLE LOWRY** (above) and **DEMAR DEROZAN** (right) are the unquestioned stars in Toronto, with the former putting up 21.2 ppg, 6.4 apg and 4.7 rpg while shooting 38.8% on 3s, and the latter contributing 23.5 ppg, 4.5 rpg and 4.0 apg. Both were good enough to get significant roles with Team USA at the Rio Olympics. There's always the concern, though, that the extra minutes over the summer translate to fatigue and inefficiency come NBA time.

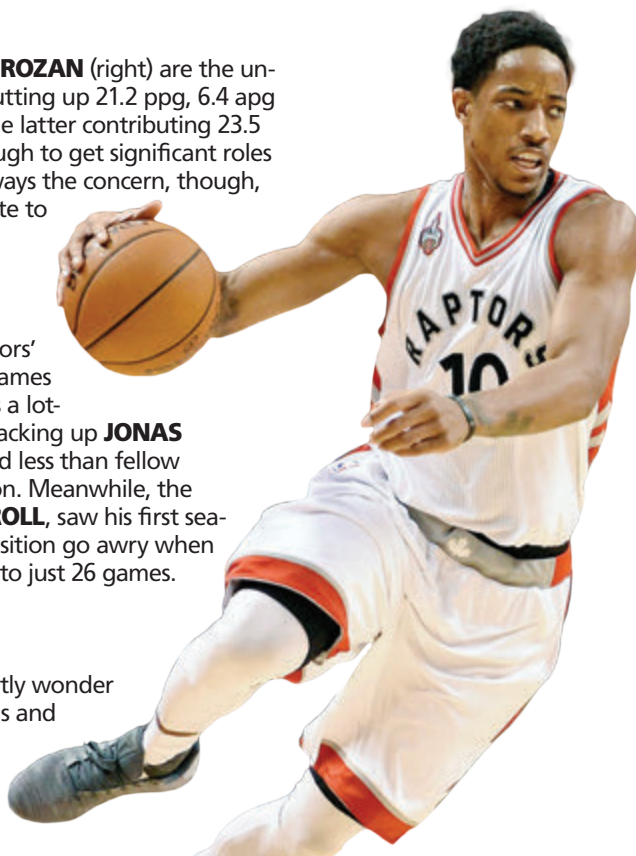
### Utah connections

Former Utes PG **DELON WRIGHT** was the Raptors' first-round pick a year ago, but played just 27 games and averaged 8.5 minutes. **JAKOB POELTL** was a lottery pick this year, and figures to get minutes backing up **JONAS VALANCIUNAS**, though he's surprisingly played less than fellow first-rounder **PASCAL SIAKAM** in the preseason. Meanwhile, the Jazz's former Junk Yard Dog, **DEMARRE CARROLL**, saw his first season in Toronto as a big-money free agent acquisition go awry when a knee injury that required surgery limited him to just 26 games.

### Who's next?

After Lowry and DeRozan, the Raptors frequently wonder where their offense will come from. Valanciunas and **TERRANCE ROSS** have been underwhelming. New PF **JARED SULLINGER** will help, but the hope is young prospects **BRUNO CABO-CLO** or **LUCAS NOGUEIRA** will step up.

— Eric Walden



### RAPTORS ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Lucas Nogueira	C	7-0	220	Brazil
Patrick Patterson	F	6-9	235	Kentucky
Kyle Lowry	G	6-0	205	Villanova
Jonas Valanciunas	C	7-0	255	Lithuania
Terrence Ross	F	6-7	195	Washington
Bruno Caboclo	F	6-9	205	Brazil
Delon Wright	G	6-5	190	Utah
DeMarre Carroll	F	6-8	212	Missouri
Cory Joseph	G	6-3	190	Texas
Norman Powell	G	6-4	215	UCLA
DeMar DeRozan	G	6-7	220	USC
Jared Sullinger	F	6-9	260	Ohio State
Jakob Poeltl	C	7-0	248	Utah
Pascal Siakam	F	6-9	230	New Mexico St.
Fred VanVleet	G	6-0	186	Wichita State
Jarrod Uthoff	F	6-9	221	Iowa
Drew Crawford	G	6-5	215	Northwestern
Yanick Moreira	C	6-11	220	SMU
E.J. Singler	F	6-6	215	Oregon
Brady Heslip	G	6-2	180	Baylor
<b>Head Coach</b> » Dwayne Casey				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
DeMar DeRozan	78	35.9	.446	.338	.850	4.5	4.0	1.0	0.3	2.2	2.1	23.5
Kyle Lowry	77	37.0	.427	.388	.811	4.7	6.4	2.1	0.4	2.9	2.7	21.2
Jonas Valanciunas	60	26.0	.565	—	.761	9.1	0.7	0.4	1.3	1.4	2.6	12.8
DeMarre Carroll	26	30.2	.389	.390	.600	4.7	1.0	1.7	0.2	1.1	2.4	11.0
Terrence Ross	73	23.9	.431	.386	.790	2.5	0.8	0.7	0.3	0.6	1.6	9.9
Luis Scola	76	21.5	.450	.404	.726	4.7	0.9	0.6	0.4	0.9	2.3	8.7
Cory Joseph	80	25.6	.439	.273	.764	2.6	3.1	0.8	0.3	1.3	1.6	8.5
Patrick Patterson	79	25.6	.414	.362	.853	4.3	1.2	0.7	0.4	0.8	1.6	6.9
Norman Powell	49	14.8	.424	.404	.811	2.3	1.0	0.6	0.2	0.7	1.2	5.6
Bismack Biyombo	82	22.0	.542	.000	.628	8.0	0.4	0.2	1.6	0.9	2.7	5.5
James Johnson	57	16.2	.475	.303	.574	2.2	1.2	0.5	0.6	0.9	1.5	5.0
Jason Thompson	19	15.4	.485	.333	.818	4.2	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.4	2.1	4.6
Delon Wright	27	8.5	.450	.385	.743	1.4	1.1	0.3	0.1	0.6	0.3	3.8
Lucas Nogueira	29	7.8	.636	.333	.533	1.6	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.0	2.2
Bruno Caboclo	6	7.2	.083	.143	—	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.3	0.5
Anthony Bennett	19	4.4	.296	.214	.900	1.2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.4	1.5

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
DeMar DeRozan	.446	.338	.850	4.5	4.0	1.0	0.3	2.2	2.1	23.5
Kyle Lowry	.427	.388	.811	4.6	6.2	2.0	0.4	2.8	2.7	20.6
Jonas Valanciunas	.565	—	.761	12.6	1.0	0.6	1.8	2.0	3.7	17.8
DeMarre Carroll	.389	.390	.600	5.6	1.2	2.0	0.3	1.3	2.9	13.1
Terrence Ross	.431	.386	.790	3.8	1.2	1.1	0.5	0.9	2.5	14.8
Luis Scola	.450	.404	.726	7.9	1.5	1.0	0.6	1.5	3.9	14.6
Cory Joseph	.439	.273	.764	3.7	4.4	1.1	0.4	1.8	2.3	11.9
Patrick Patterson	.414	.362	.853	6.1	1.7	0.9	0.6	1.2	2.3	9.7
Norman Powell	.424	.404	.811	5.5	2.3	1.4	0.5	1.6	2.9	13.6
Bismack Biyombo	.542	.000	.628	13.0	0.6	0.4	2.6	1.4	4.5	9.0
James Johnson	.475	.303	.574	4.9	2.6	1.1	1.3	2.1	3.3	11.2
Jason Thompson	.485	.333	.818	9.9	1.2	1.0	1.5	1.0	4.9	10.7
Delon Wright	.450	.385	.743	5.8	4.9	1.3	0.5	2.5	1.1	16.2
Lucas Nogueira	.636	.333	.533	7.4	1.1	1.9	1.9	1.8	4.6	10.4
Bruno Caboclo	.083	.143	—	1.7	0.8	1.7	0.8	3.3	1.7	2.5
Anthony Bennett	.296	.214	.900	9.9	0.0	2.1	0.0	1.7	3.4	12.0

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS

56	49	43	34	23
2015-16, lost in East finals	2014-15, lost in East first round	2013-14, lost in East first round	2012-13	2011-12
66-game schedule, lockout season				

## Butler's Bulls make big changes after letdown



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### He's the man

Chicago's disappointing season last year was fraught with rumors of discord surrounding **JIMMY BUTLER** (above) and Derrick Rose openly feuding, while others mentioned that Butler's attempts to become a vocal leader after years of being a "by example guy" rubbed some the wrong way. Regardless, with Rose gone, and Butler coming off an appearance with Team USA, there's no doubt whose team it is now.

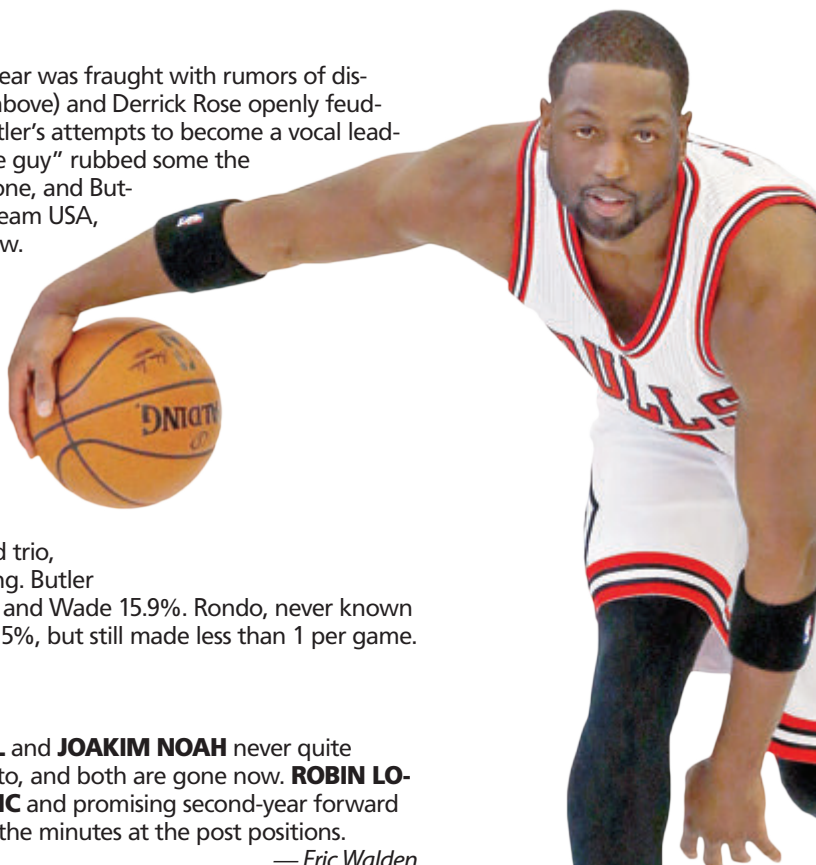
### Coming home

**DWYANE WADE** (right) shocked the basketball world by leaving the Miami Heat and returning to his native Chicago to join the Bulls. He'll be part of a new-look backcourt there, teaming with **RAJON RONDO** while Butler moves to forward. While they make up a talented trio, there are concerns about floor-spacing. Butler made 31.2 percent of his 3s last year, and Wade 15.9%. Rondo, never known for his 3-point prowess, did make 36.5%, but still made less than 1 per game.

### New-look frontcourt, too

The big-man tandem of **PAU GASOL** and **JOAKIM NOAH** never quite meshed the way the Bulls wanted it to, and both are gone now. **ROBIN LOPEZ**, **TAJ GIBSON**, **NIKOLA MIROTIC** and promising second-year forward **BOBBY PORTIS** will get the bulk of the minutes at the post positions.

—Eric Walden



### BULLS ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Taj Gibson	F	6-9	225	USC
Michael Carter-Williams	G	6-6	190	Syracuse
Nikola Mirotic	F	6-10	220	Montenegro
Doug McDermott	F	6-8	225	Creighton
Jerian Grant	G	6-4	195	Notre Dame
Bobby Portis	F	6-11	230	Arkansas
Jimmy Butler	G	6-7	220	Marquette
Robin Lopez	C	7-0	255	Stanford
Cristiano Felicio	C	6-10	275	Brazil
Rajon Rondo	G	6-1	186	Kentucky
Dwyane Wade	G	6-4	220	Marquette
Denzel Valentine	G	6-6	210	Michigan St.
Paul Zipser	G-F	6-8	215	Germany
Isaiah Canaan	G	6-0	201	Murray State
Spencer Dinwiddie	G	6-6	200	Colorado
Thomas Walkup	G	6-4	195	Stephen F. Austin
<b>Head Coach » Fred Hoiberg</b>				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game												
Player	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Jimmy Butler	67	36.9	.454	.312	.832	5.3	4.8	1.6	0.6	2.0	1.9	20.9
Pau Gasol	72	31.8	.469	.348	.792	11.0	4.1	0.6	2.0	2.3	2.1	16.5
Derrick Rose	66	31.8	.427	.293	.793	3.4	4.7	0.7	0.2	2.7	1.3	16.4
Nikola Mirotic	66	24.9	.407	.390	.807	5.5	1.5	0.9	0.7	1.5	2.3	11.8
Doug McDermott	81	23.0	.452	.425	.857	2.4	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.7	1.6	9.4
Taj Gibson	73	26.5	.526	.000	.692	6.9	1.5	0.6	1.1	1.1	2.5	8.6
E'Twaun Moore	59	21.4	.481	.452	.629	2.3	1.7	0.6	0.3	0.9	1.7	7.5
Mike Dunleavy	31	22.7	.410	.394	.784	2.7	1.3	0.5	0.3	0.8	2.1	7.2
Aaron Brooks	69	16.1	.401	.357	.766	1.5	2.6	0.4	0.1	1.2	1.9	7.1
Bobby Portis	62	17.8	.427	.308	.727	5.4	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.9	1.6	7.0
Justin Holiday	27	18.9	.413	.433	.815	2.3	1.7	0.7	0.6	1.0	1.5	6.5
Tony Snell	64	20.3	.372	.361	.909	3.1	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.8	1.6	5.3
Joakim Noah	29	21.9	.383	.000	.489	8.8	3.8	0.6	1.0	1.8	2.7	4.3
Kirk Hinrich	35	15.9	.398	.411	.938	1.7	1.7	0.4	0.0	0.8	1.8	3.8
Cristiano Felicio	31	10.4	.556	.000	.714	3.3	0.8	0.2	0.4	1.0	3.4	3.4
Cameron Bairstow	25	18	.325	.200	.875	1.6	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	1.1	1.9

Per 36 Minutes												
Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS		
Jimmy Butler	.454	.312	.832	5.2	4.7	1.6	0.6	1.9	1.8	20.4		
Pau Gasol	.469	.348	.792	12.5	4.6	0.7	2.3	2.6	2.3	18.7		
Derrick Rose	.427	.293	.793	3.9	5.3	0.8	0.2	3.0	1.4	18.5		
Nikola Mirotic	.407	.390	.807	7.9	2.2	1.3	1.0	2.2	3.3	17.0		
Doug McDermott	.452	.425	.857	3.8	1.1	0.3	0.1	1.0	2.5	14.8		
Taj Gibson	.526	.000	.692	9.4	2.0	0.9	1.4	1.5	3.3	11.7		
E'Twaun Moore	.481	.452	.629	3.8	2.8	1.1	0.5	1.5	2.9	12.6		
Mike Dunleavy	.410	.394	.784	4.3	2.0	0.7	0.5	1.3	3.4	11.4		
Aaron Brooks	.401	.357	.766	3.3	5.8	1.0	0.3	2.7	4.3	16.0		
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Justin Holiday	.413	.433	.815	4.4	3.2	1.3	1.1	1.8	2.8	12.4		
Tony Snell	.372	.361	.909	5.5	1.7	0.4	0.5	1.4	2.8	9.4		
Joakim Noah	.383	.000	.489	14.5	6.2	1.0	1.6	2.9	4.4	7.0		
Kirk Hinrich	.398	.411	.938	3.8	3.8	0.8	0.1	1.8	4.1	8.6		
Cristiano Felicio	.556	.000	.714	11.4	2.9	0.7	1.5	1.5	3.5	11.8		
Cameron Bairstow	.325	.200	.875	9.8	2.1	0.7	1.0	1.4	6.6	11.9		

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS

Year	2015-16	2014-15, lost in East semifinals	2013-14, lost in East first round	2012-13, lost in East semifinals	2011-12, lost in East first round
66-game schedule, lockout season	42	50	48	45	50



## Champ Cavaliers can play 'overlooked' card



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### What do you do for an encore?

So **LEBRON JAMES** (top center) & Co. rally from a 3-1 deficit against the monolithic Warriors to give Cleveland its first championship in half a century ... and now the Cavs are underdogs (of a sort) again. While Las Vegas has the Cavaliers pegged to win the second-most games in the league, and the most in the Eastern Conference, they're projected to win 10 fewer games than the Warriors. James is sure to use the team's "overlooked" status as motivation this season.

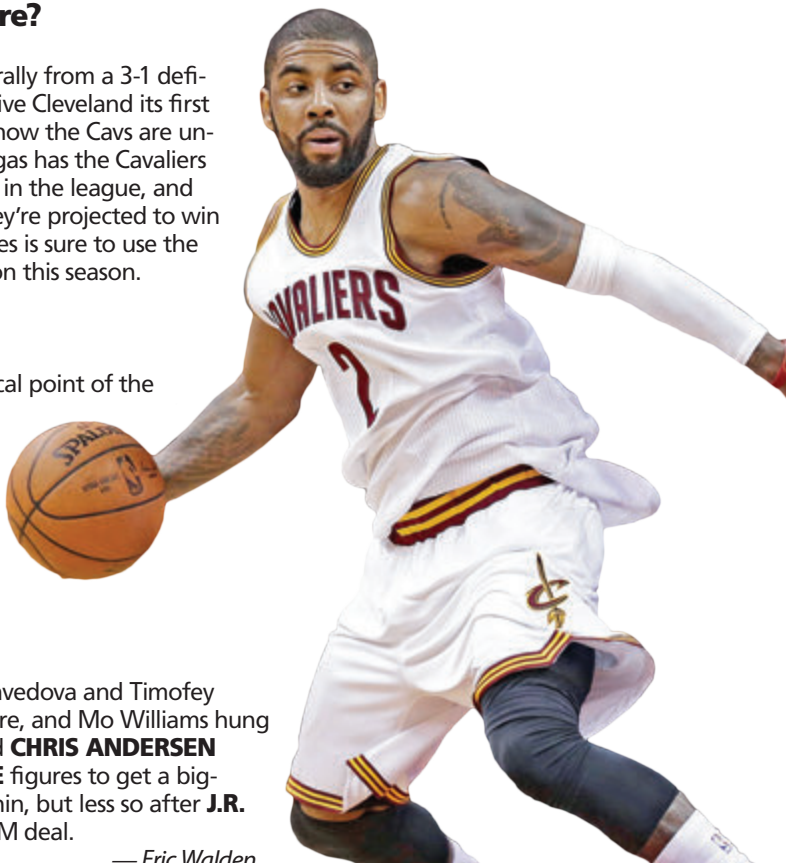
### That other guy

While James deservedly remains the focal point of the Cavaliers, point guard **KYRIE IRVING** (right) has made himself into quite the second option. Irving not only hit the deciding 3-pointer of the Finals, he started every game for Team USA at the Rio Olympics, averaging 12 points and 3 assists per game.

### Support crew

Key contributors such as Matthew Dellavedova and Timofey Mozgov took big-money deals elsewhere, and Mo Williams hung up his sneakers. **MIKE DUNLEAVY** and **CHRIS ANDERSEN** have stepped in, and **JORDAN MCRAE** figures to get a bigger role. Still, the bench remains a bit thin, but less so after **J.R. SMITH** just agreed to his four-year, \$57M deal.

— Eric Walden



### CAVALIERS ROSTER

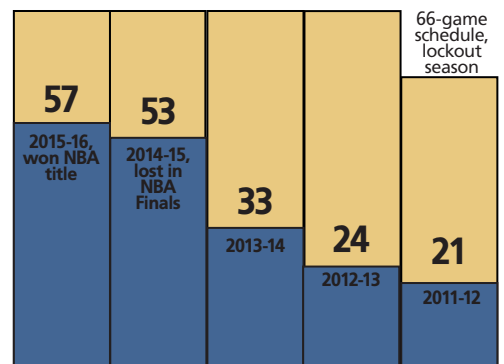
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Kyrie Irving	G	6-3	193	Duke
Channing Frye	C	6-11	255	Arizona
Mike Dunleavy	F	6-9	230	Duke
Kevin Love	F	6-10	251	UCLA
Iman Shumpert	G	6-5	220	Georgia Tech
Tristan Thompson	F-C	6-9	238	Texas
Jordan McRae	G	6-6	185	Tennessee
Chris Andersen	F-C	6-10	245	Blinn JC
Richard Jefferson	F	6-7	233	Arizona
DeAndre Liggins	G	6-6	209	Kentucky
James Jones	F-G	6-8	218	Miami
Kay Felder	G	5-9	176	Oakland
LeBron James	F-G	6-8	250	St. Vincent-St. Mary HS
Markel Brown	G	6-3	190	Oklahoma St.
Dahntay Jones	G-F	6-6	225	Duke
Cory Jefferson	F	6-9	218	Baylor
Eric Moreland	F-C	6-10	238	Oregon St.
John Holland	G-F	6-5	205	Boston
Jonathan Holmes	F	6-9	242	Texas
<b>Head Coach » Tyrone Lue</b>				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS	
LeBron James	76	35.6	.520	.309	.731	7.4	6.8	1.4	0.6	3.3	1.9	25.3	
Kyrie Irving	53	31.5	.448	.321	.885	3.0	4.7	1.1	0.3	2.3	2.0	19.6	
Kevin Love	77	31.5	.419	.360	.822	9.9	2.4	0.8	0.5	1.8	2.1	16.0	
Dahntay Jones	1	42.0	.429	.500	—	5.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	6.0	13.0	
J.R. Smith	77	30.7	.415	.400	.634	2.8	1.7	1.1	0.3	0.8	2.6	12.4	
Mo Williams	41	18.2	.437	.353	.905	1.8	2.4	0.3	0.1	1.4	1.5	8.2	
Tristan Thompson	82	27.7	.588	—	.616	9.0	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.7	2.5	7.8	
Matthew Dellavedova	76	24.6	.405	.410	.864	2.1	4.4	0.6	0.1	1.5	2.3	7.5	
Channing Frye	26	17.2	.441	.377	.786	3.6	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.5	2.2	7.5	
Timofey Mozgov	76	17.4	.565	.143	.716	4.4	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.9	2.1	6.3	
Iman Shumpert	54	24.4	.374	.295	.784	3.8	1.7	1.0	0.4	1.1	2.2	5.8	
Richard Jefferson	74	17.9	.458	.382	.667	1.7	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.6	1.7	5.5	
Jordan McRae	15	7.5	.442	.636	.692	0.8	1.0	0.0	0.1	0.6	0.7	4.1	
James Jones	48	9.6	.408	.394	.808	1.0	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	1.0	3.7	
Anderson Varejao	31	10.0	.421	.000	.762	2.9	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.5	1.1	2.6	
Jared Cunningham	40	8.9	.352	—	.313	.625	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.9	2.6
Sasha Kaun	25	3.8	.529	—	.455	1.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.9	
Joe Harris	5	3.0	.250	.250	—	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.6	

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
LeBron James	.520	.309	.731	7.5	6.8	1.4	0.7	3.3	1.9	25.5
Kevin Love	.419	.360	.822	11.3	2.8	0.9	0.6	2.1	2.4	18.3
J.R. Smith	.415	.400	.634	3.3	2.0	1.2	0.3	0.9	3.1	14.6
Tristan Thompson	.588	—	.616	11.7	1.0	0.6	0.8	1.0	3.2	10.2
Matthew Dellavedova	.405	.410	.864	3.1	6.5	0.8	0.2	2.2	3.4	11.0
Kyrie Irving	.448	.321	.885	3.4	5.4	1.2	0.4	2.7	2.3	22.5
Timofey Mozgov	.565	.143	.716	9.1	0.9	0.6	1.5	1.9	4.3	12.9
Richard Jefferson	.458	.382	.667	3.5	1.6	0.9	0.4	1.2	3.5	11.1
Iman Shumpert	.374	.295	.784	5.6	2.5	1.5	0.5	1.6	3.3	8.5
Mo Williams	.437	.353	.905	3.5	4.7	0.7	0.2	2.7	2.9	16.3
James Jones	.408	.394	.808	3.9	1.1	0.9	0.8	1.0	3.9	13.8
Channing Frye	.441	.377	.786	7.5	2.1	0.6	0.6	1.0	4.5	15.8
Jared Cunningham	.352	.313	.625	2.9	1.9	1.2	0.2	1.8	3.8	10.5
Anderson Varejao	.421	.000	.762	10.6	2.3	1.3	0.6	1.9	4.1	9.3
Jordan McRae	.442	.636	.692	3.8	4.8	0.0	0.3	2.9	3.2	19.8
Sasha Kaun	.529	—	.455	9.9	1.1	1.5	1.9	2.7	4.2	8.7
Dahntay Jones	.429	.500	—	4.3	1.7	0.9	1.7	0.0	5.1	11.1
Joe Harris	.250	.250	—	7.2	4.8	0.0	0.0	2.4	2.4	7.2

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Jackson's knee issues a problem for Pistons



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Extremely talented, historically bad

**ANDRE DRUMMOND** (above) is one of the NBA's more talented big men. His scoring and rebounding have improved every season, up to 16.2 and a league-leading 14.8, respectively, last season. His free-throw shooting, though, remains sub-abysmal. His FTA rose from 4.5 in 2014-15 to 7.2 last season, thanks to his 35.5% conversion rate.

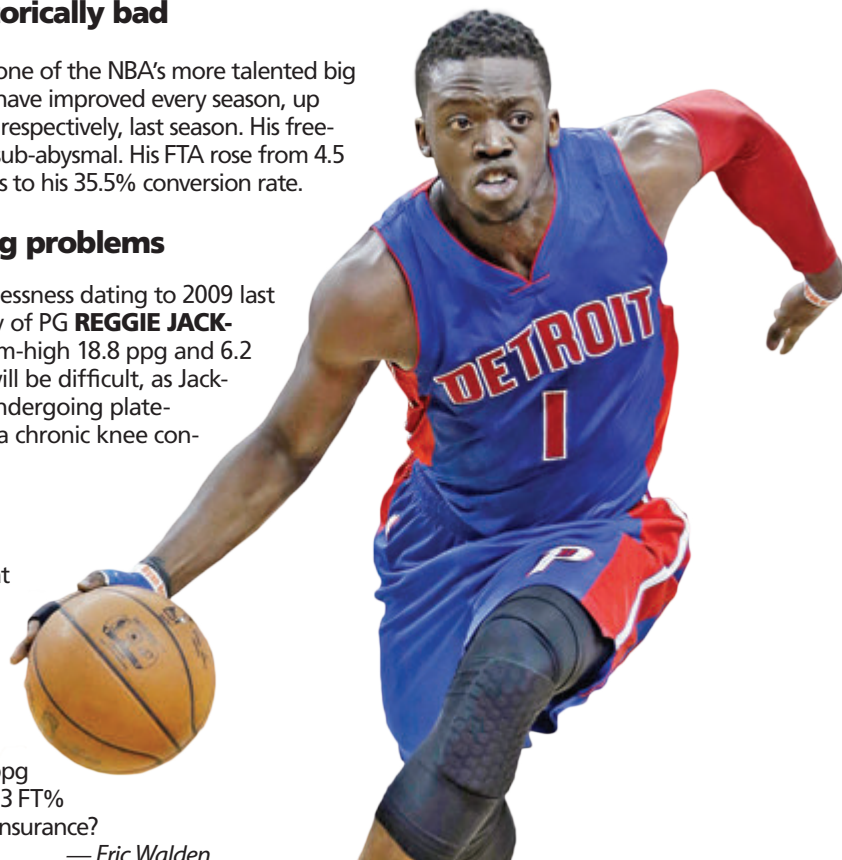
### Knee problems mean big problems

Detroit broke a streak of playoff-lessness dating to 2009 last year thanks in big part to the play of PG **REGGIE JACKSON** (right), who poured in a team-high 18.8 ppg and 6.2 appg. Making it back this season will be difficult, as Jackson will miss 6 to 8 weeks after undergoing platelet-rich plasma injections to treat a chronic knee condition.

### A curious contract

While \$7 million per year isn't what it used to be, the three-year, \$21 million deal given to 7-foot-3, 290-pound center **BOBAN MARJANOVIC** is odd. Yes, the metrics listed him as the most-efficient center in the NBA last season. He also averaged 5.5 ppg and 3.6 rpg in 9.4 mpg. Will his 76.3 FT% make him late-game Drummond insurance?

—Eric Walden



### PISTONS ROSTER

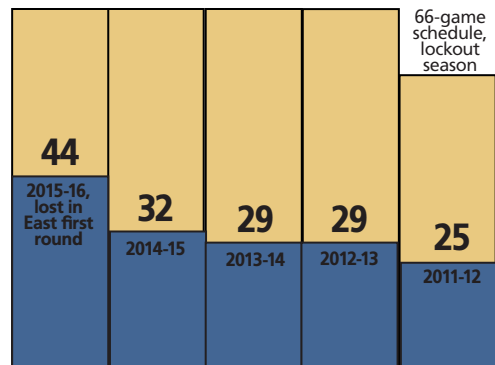
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Kentavious Caldwell-Pope	G	6-5	205	Georgia
Reggie Bullock	G-F	6-7	205	North Carolina
Marcus Morris	F	6-9	235	Kansas
Stanley Johnson	F	6-7	245	Arizona
Aron Baynes	C	6-10	260	Washington St.
Tobias Harris	F	6-9	235	Tennessee
Reggie Jackson	G	6-3	208	Boston College
Darrun Hilliard	G	6-6	205	Villanova
Lorenzo Brown	G	6-5	189	N.C. State
Jon Leuer	F	6-10	228	Wisconsin
Ish Smith	G	6-0	175	Wake Forest
Andre Drummond	C	6-11	279	Connecticut
Boban Marjanovic	C	7-3	290	Croatia
Michael Gbinije	G	6-7	200	Syracuse
Henry Ellenson	F	6-11	245	Marquette
Ray McCallum	G	6-3	190	Detroit Mercy
Nikola Jovanovic	F	6-11	235	USC
Trey Freeman	G	6-2	185	Old Dominion
<b>Head Coach » Stan Van Gundy</b>				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Reggie Jackson	79	30.7	.434	.353	.864	3.2	6.2	0.7	0.1	2.8	2.4	18.8
Tobias Harris	27	33.4	.477	.375	.911	6.2	2.6	0.7	0.4	1.1	2.3	16.6
Andre Drummond	81	32.9	.521	.333	.355	14.8	0.8	1.5	1.4	1.9	3.0	16.2
Kentavious Caldwell-Pope	76	36.7	.420	.309	.811	3.7	1.8	1.4	0.2	1.4	2.2	14.5
Marcus Morris	80	35.7	.434	.362	.749	5.1	2.5	0.8	0.3	1.8	2.1	14.1
Ersan Ilyasova	52	27.6	.425	.363	.725	5.4	1.1	0.7	0.5	1.1	2.3	11.3
Stanley Johnson	73	23.1	.375	.307	.784	4.2	1.6	0.8	0.2	1.6	2.4	8.1
Jodie Meeks	3	14.3	.350	.444	1.000	1.7	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.7	7.3
Brandon Jennings	23	18.1	.371	.312	.711	2.0	3.0	0.5	0.1	1.0	1.0	6.8
Aron Baynes	81	15.2	.505	.000	.764	4.7	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.8	1.9	6.3
Anthony Tolliver	72	18.6	.386	.360	.617	3.2	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.4	1.2	5.3
Spencer Dinwiddie	12	13.3	.352	.100	.576	1.4	1.8	0.3	0.0	0.6	1.7	4.8
Steve Blake	58	17.0	.388	.344	.800	1.5	3.4	0.4	0.1	1.4	1.2	4.4
Darrun Hilliard	38	10.1	.397	.380	.725	1.2	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.7	4.0
Reggie Bullock	37	11.6	.439	.415	.933	1.8	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.8	3.3
Justin Harper	5	7.0	.400	.444	.500	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.6	2.6
Joel Anthony	19	5.1	.600	—	.750	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.8	0.9

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
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Reggie Jackson	.434	.353	.864	3.8	7.3	0.9	0.2	3.3	2.8	22.1
Stanley Johnson	.375	.307	.784	6.5	2.5	1.2	0.3	2.4	3.8	12.7
Ersan Ilyasova	.425	.363	.725	7.1	1.4	1.0	0.7	1.5	3.0	14.8
Anthony Tolliver	.386	.360	.617	6.1	1.4	0.7	0.4	0.8	2.3	10.3
Aron Baynes	.505	.000	.764	11.2	1.5	0.6	1.5	2.0	4.4	15.0
Steve Blake	.388	.344	.800	3.2	7.3	0.9	0.2	3.0	2.6	9.3
Tobias Harris	.477	.375	.911	6.7	2.8	0.7	0.5	1.2	2.5	17.8
Reggie Bullock	.439	.415	.933	5.7	3.3	0.8	0.2	0.7	2.4	10.2
Brandon Jennings	.371	.312	.711	4.0	6.1	1.0	0.2	1.9	2.1	13.6
Darrun Hilliard	.397	.380	.725	4.2	2.5	0.8	0.1	1.8	2.6	14.3
Spencer Dinwiddie	.352	.100	.576	3.8	5.0	0.7	0.0	1.6	4.5	13.1
Joel Anthony	.600	—	.750	7.9	0.4	0.7	0.5	0.7	5.6	6.8
Jodie Meeks	.350	.444	1.000	4.2	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.7	18.4
Justin Harper	.400	.444	.500	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	2.1	3.1	13.4

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Pacers will push pace with George, Teague



PHOTO CREDIT | The Associated Press

### Putting the pace in "Pacers"

Team president **LARRY BIRD** has said that he wants Indiana to feature a more uptempo attack, and the roster changes he's made mostly reflect that. Two-way stud **PAUL GEORGE** (above) remains the main guy, and he proved himself all the way back from a gruesome leg injury the year before. But George will have a couple new running buddies in the starting line-up, thanks to the draft-day acquisition of Swiss-army-knife forward **THADDEUS YOUNG** and swapping point guard George Hill in a three-way deal for **JEFF TEAGUE** (right). Though Teague is coming off what many considered to be a down year, he still averaged 15.7 ppg and 5.9 apg, while hitting 40% from 3.

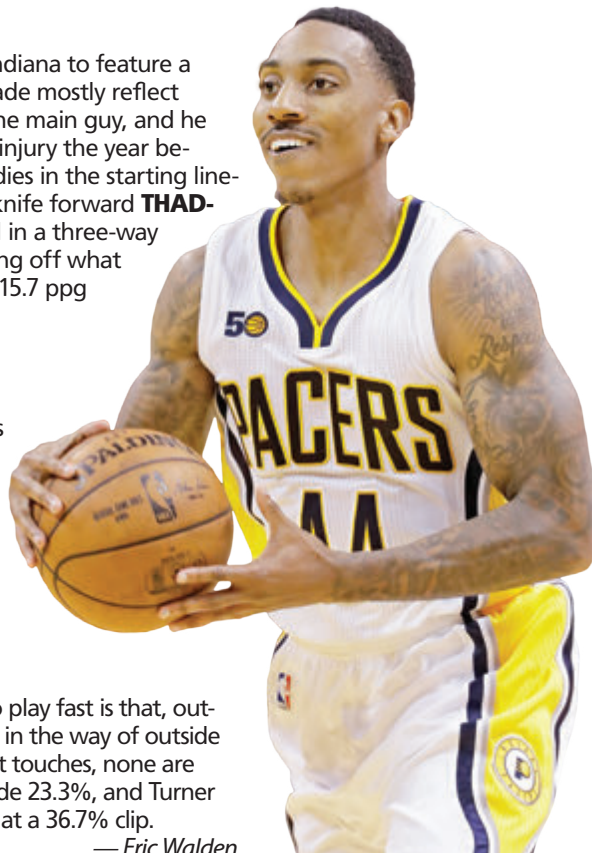
### Big mentor Big Al

Second-year big man **MYLES TURNER** is one of Indy's more intriguing young players but, not surprisingly, he was inconsistent as a 19-year-old. Given that only 21.9 percent of the 7-footer's possessions last year involved a post-up, Bird did make an exception to his play-fast mandate by bringing in post-play maestro **AL JEFFERSON** to tutor Turner.

### Staying inside the lines

One curious component of Bird preferring the Pacers to play fast is that, outside of George and Teague, Indiana doesn't have much in the way of outside shooters. Among the other guys bound to get the most touches, none are prolific at treys — **MONTA ELLIS** hit 30.9%, Young made 23.3%, and Turner hit 21.4%. Backup wing **C.J. MILES** did at least convert at a 36.7% clip.

—Eric Walden



### PACERS ROSTER

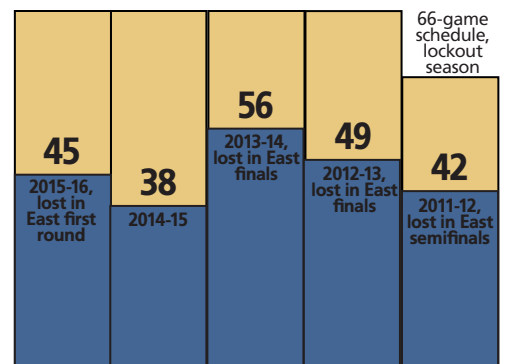
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
C.J. Miles	G	6-6	231	Skyline HS
Paul George	F	6-9	220	Fresno St.
Jeff Teague	G	6-2	186	Wake Forest
Myles Turner	F	6-11	243	Texas
Thaddeus Young	F	6-8	221	Georgia Tech
Monta Ellis	G	6-3	185	Lanier HS
Lavoy Allen	F	6-9	255	Temple
Rodney Stuckey	G	6-5	205	E. Washington
Jeremy Evans	F	6-9	196	W. Kentucky
Glenn Robinson III	F	6-7	222	Michigan
Rakeem Christmas	F	6-9	250	Syracuse
Joseph Young	G	6-2	180	Oregon
Al Jefferson	C-F	6-10	289	Prentiss HS
Georges Niang	F	6-8	230	Iowa State
Aaron Brooks	G	6-0	161	Oregon
Kevin Seraphin	F	6-10	278	Guinea
Julyan Stone	G	6-6	200	UTEP
Nick Zeisloft	G	6-4	210	Indiana
Alex Poythress	F	6-8	230	Kentucky
<b>Head Coach »</b> Nate McMillan				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Paul George	81	34.8	.418	.371	.860	7.0	4.1	1.9	0.4	3.3	2.8	23.1
Monta Ellis	81	33.8	.427	.309	.786	3.3	4.7	1.9	0.5	2.5	2.1	13.8
George Hill	74	34.1	.441	.408	.760	4.0	3.5	1.1	0.2	1.4	2.0	12.1
C.J. Miles	64	22.9	.409	.367	.750	2.7	1.0	0.8	0.5	1.1	2.2	11.8
Myles Turner	60	22.8	.498	.214	.727	5.5	0.7	0.4	1.4	1.1	2.6	10.3
Ian Mahinmi	71	25.6	.589	—	.587	7.1	1.5	0.9	1.1	1.4	3.1	9.3
Rodney Stuckey	58	22.0	.413	.241	.829	2.7	2.4	0.7	0.1	1.3	1.3	8.9
Jordan Hill	73	20.7	.506	.000	.712	6.2	1.2	0.5	0.5	1.3	2.1	8.8
Lavoy Allen	79	20.2	.516	—	.630	5.4	1.0	0.3	0.5	0.9	1.9	5.4
Ty Lawson	13	18.1	.418	.357	.500	2.4	4.4	0.8	0.1	1.0	1.2	4.9
Chase Budinger	49	14.9	.418	.290	.708	2.5	1.0	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.9	4.4
Solomon Hill	59	14.7	.447	.324	.857	2.8	1.0	0.6	0.2	0.6	1.2	4.2
Rakeem Christmas	1	6.0	1.000	—	—	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	4.0
Glenn Robinson	245	11.3	.430	.378	.692	1.5	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.5	3.8
Joseph Young	41	9.4	.367	.217	.800	1.2	1.6	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.7	3.8
Shayne Whittington	7	5.9	.455	.000	.500	1.7	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.7	1.0	1.6

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Paul George	.418	.371	.860	.2	4.2	1.9	0.4	3.4	2.9	23.9
Monta Ellis	.427	.309	.786	3.6	5.0	2.0	0.5	2.7	2.3	14.8
George Hill	.441	.408	.760	4.3	3.7	1.2	0.2	1.4	2.1	12.8
C.J. Miles	.409	.367	.750	4.3	1.5	1.3	0.7	1.7	3.5	18.5
Myles Turner	.498	.214	.727	8.7	1.1	0.7	2.3	1.8	4.2	16.3
Ian Mahinmi	.589	—	.587	10.1	2.1	1.3	1.5	2.0	4.4	13.1
Rodney Stuckey	.413	.241	.829	4.4	4.0	1.2	0.2	2.1	2.2	14.6
Jordan Hill	.506	.000	.712	10.7	2.1	0.9	0.9	2.2	3.7	15.3
Lavoy Allen	.516	—	.630	9.5	1.7	0.6	0.9	1.6	3.3	9.6
Ty Lawson	.418	.357	.500	4.7	8.7	1.5	0.2	2.0	2.5	9.8
Chase Budinger	.418	.290	.708	6.0	2.4	1.4	0.4	1.5	2.3	10.7
Solomon Hill	.447	.324	.857	6.9	2.4	1.5	0.5	1.4	2.8	10.2
Rakeem Christmas	1.000	—	—	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	24.0
Glenn Robinson	.430	.378	.692	4.8	1.8	1.2	0.6	1.3	1.5	12.1
Joseph Young	.367	.217	.800	4.7	6.1	1.4	0.0	3.1	2.8	14.4
Shayne Whittington	.455	.000	.500	10.5	2.6	0.9	0.9	4.4	6.1	9.7

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Bucks likely to be even freakier this season



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### The point guard's choice for point guard ...

Coach **JASON KIDD**, one of the NBA's all-time assist leaders, raised some eyebrows when he announced that 6-foot-11 forward **GIANNIS ANTE TOKOUNMPO** (above) would be the starting point guard for Milwaukee this year. The Greek Freak has shown enough talent as a jack-of-all-trades foundational piece that he got a four-year, \$100 million extension. But point guard? For what it's worth, his avg have gone from 1.9 to 2.6 to 4.3 in three seasons.

### Missing Middleton

**KHRIS MIDDLETON** (right) was one of the more underappreciated players in the league last year, in part because he played for the underachieving Bucks. His absence from the lineup this year due to a torn hamstring won't go unnoticed, though. In addition to leading Milwaukee in scoring last year, he provided crucial spacing as a rare 3-point threat (39.6%) in a lineup that features lots of long arms but woefully few long-distance makes.

### Roster intrigue

Last year's signing of **GREG MONROE** is widely considered a mistake, due to his defensive shortcomings, and he is thought to be following guard Michael Carter-Williams on the way out. Meanwhile, Sudanese-Australian-Canadian center **THON MAKER** and Cavaliers expat **MATTHEW DELLAVEDOVA** were the big offseason additions. The team is perhaps most excited by the progress of former No. 2 pick **JABARI PARKER**, who averaged 20 ppg after the All-Star break last season.

—Eric Walden



### BUCKS ROSTER

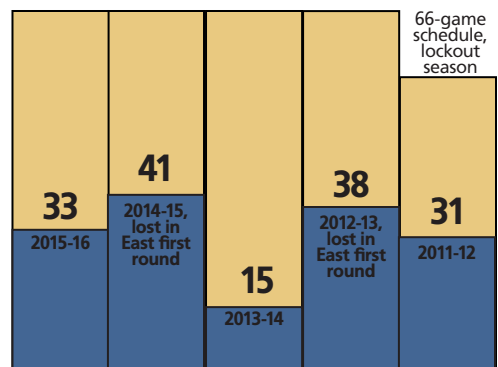
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
John Henson	F	6-11	229	North Carolina
Giannis Antetokounmpo	G	6-11	222	Greece
Tony Snell	G	6-7	200	New Mexico
Jabari Parker	F	6-8	250	Duke
Rashad Vaughn	G	6-6	202	UNLV
Khris Middleton	F-G	6-8	234	Texas A&M
Greg Monroe	C-F	6-11	265	Georgetown
Mirza Teletovic	F	6-9	242	Bosnia
Matthew Dellavedova	G	6-4	198	Saint Mary's
Thon Maker	F-C	7-1	223	South Sudan
Malcolm Brogdon	G	6-5	215	Virginia
Miles Plumlee	C-F	6-11	249	Duke
Jason Terry	G	6-2	185	Arizona
Steve Novak	F	6-10	225	Marquette
Orlando Johnson	G	6-5	220	UCSB
J.J. O'Brien	F	6-7	228	San Diego St.
Jabari Brown	G	6-4	215	Missouri
Jaleel Roberts	C	7-1	225	UNC-Asheville
<b>Head Coach » Jason Kidd</b>				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Khris Middleton	79	36.1	.444	.396	.888	3.8	4.2	1.7	0.2	2.3	2.6	18.2
Giannis Antetokounmpo	80	35.3	.506	.257	.724	7.7	4.3	1.2	1.4	2.6	3.2	16.9
Greg Monroe	79	29.3	.522	.000	.740	8.8	2.3	0.9	0.8	1.6	2.1	15.3
Jabari Parker	76	31.7	.493	.257	.768	5.2	1.7	0.9	0.4	1.5	2.0	14.1
Michael Carter-Williams	54	30.5	.452	.273	.654	5.1	5.2	1.5	0.8	2.8	3.0	11.5
Jerryd Bayless	52	28.9	.423	.437	.778	2.7	3.1	0.9	0.2	1.4	2.1	10.4
O.J. Mayo	41	26.6	.371	.321	.775	2.6	2.9	1.2	0.2	1.8	3.1	7.8
John Henson	57	16.8	.564	.000	.590	3.9	0.9	0.3	1.9	1.1	2.3	7.0
Greivis Vasquez	23	20.0	.326	.247	.846	2.0	4.0	0.4	0.0	1.7	1.8	5.7
Miles Plumlee	61	14.3	.601	—	.576	3.8	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.7	1.2	5.1
Tyler Ennis	46	14.2	.449	.333	.735	1.6	2.1	0.5	0.0	1.0	1.4	4.5
Jared Cunningham	4	13.8	.286	.286	.857	2.3	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.8	1.0	4.0
Rashad Vaughn	70	14.3	.305	.293	.800	1.3	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.4	1.0	3.1
Johnny O'Bryant	66	13.0	.411	1.000	.675	2.7	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.5	1.5	3.0
Steve Novak	3	6.7	.333	.333	1.000	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	2.3
Damien Inglis	20	7.8	.351	.231	.875	1.6	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.6	1.8
Chris Copeland	24	6.5	.333	.278	.857	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.7	2.1

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Khris Middleton	.444	.396	.888	3.8	4.2	1.7	0.2	2.3	2.6	18.1
Giannis Antetokounmpo	.506	.257	.724	7.8	4.4	1.2	1.4	2.7	3.3	17.2
Jabari Parker	.493	.257	.768	5.9	1.9	1.0	0.4	1.7	2.3	16.0
Greg Monroe	.522	.000	.740	10.8	2.8	1.1	1.0	2.0	2.5	18.8
Michael Carter-Williams	.452	.273	.654	6.0	6.1	1.7	0.9	3.3	3.5	13.6
Jerryd Bayless	.423	.437	.778	3.4	3.9	1.1	0.3	1.7	2.7	12.9
O.J. Mayo	.371	.321	.775	3.5	3.9	1.6	0.3	2.4	4.2	10.6
Rashad Vaughn	.305	.293	.800	3.2	1.4	1.0	0.6	1.0	2.6	7.8
John Henson	.564	.000	.590	8.3	2.0	0.7	4.1	2.4	4.9	14.9
Miles Plumlee	.601	.000	.576	9.6	0.7	0.9	2.1	1.7	3.0	13.0
Johnny O'Bryant	.411	1.000	.675	7.4	1.3	0.8	0.3	1.3	4.2	8.4
Tyler Ennis	.449	.333	.735	4.1	5.2	1.4	0.1	2.5	3.5	11.3
Greivis Vasquez	.326	.247	.846	3.7	7.1	0.8	0.0	3.1	3.3	10.2
Chris Copeland	.333	.278	.857	2.3	2.5	0.5	0.0	1.4	3.9	11.5
Damien Inglis	.351	.231	.875	7.2	2.3	1.4	0.7	2.5	2.5	8.3
Jared Cunningham	.286	.286	.857	5.9	0.7	1.3	0.0	2.0	2.6	10.5
Steve Novak	.333	.333	1.000	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	12.6

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Howard must be Millsap's Hawks wingman



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Millsap's the man

Do-it-all forward **PAUL MILLSAP** (right) literally did it all for the Hawks last season. He led the team in points (17.1), rebounds (9.0), steals (1.9) and blocks (1.8), and was third in assists (3.3), all while putting up solid percentages from the field (47.0), the free-throw line (75.7) and on 3s (31.9). With the team trading away Jeff Teague and losing Al Horford in free agency, though, even more will fall on his shoulders.

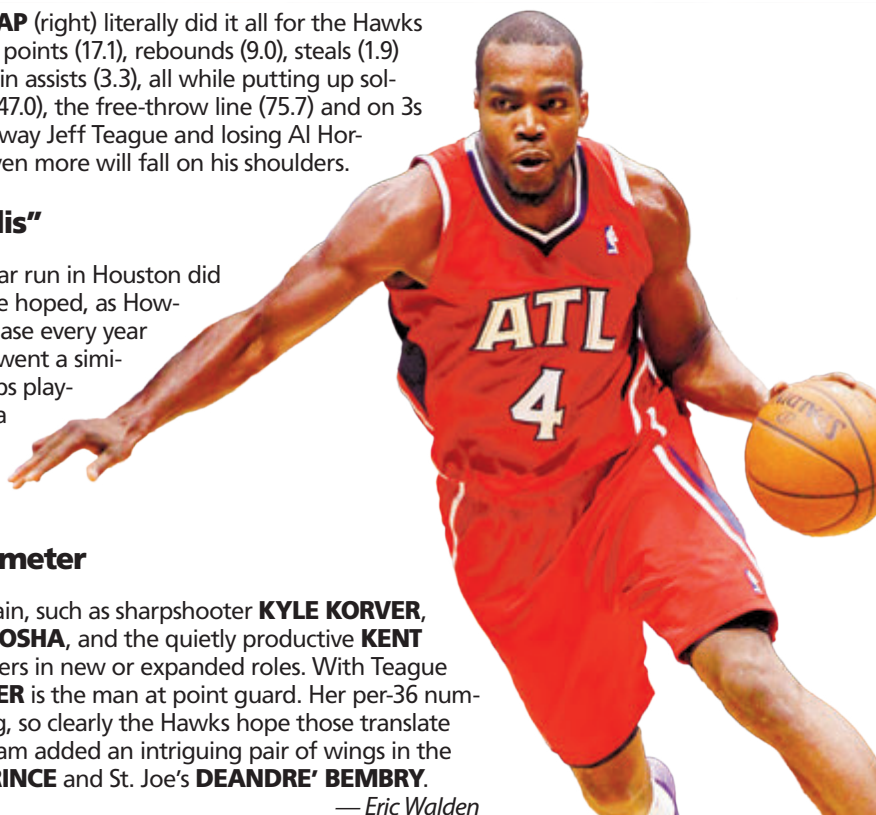
### A return to "Metropolis"

**DWIGHT HOWARD's** three-year run in Houston did not pan out the way either side hoped, as Howard (above) saw his FGAs decrease every year (11.3 to 8.5) and his ppg underwent a similar decline (18.3 to 13.7). Perhaps playing in his hometown of Atlanta will yield the additional offensive opportunities "Superman" craves.

### New faces on the perimeter

While some familiar faces remain, such as sharpshooter **KYLE KORVER**, defensive whiz **THABO SEFOLOSHA**, and the quietly productive **KENT BAZEMORE**, there will be others in new or expanded roles. With Teague off to Indy, **DENNIS SCHRODER** is the man at point guard. Her per-36 numbers were 19.5 ppg and 7.8 apg, so clearly the Hawks hope those translate as a starter. Meanwhile, the team added an intriguing pair of wings in the draft, in Baylor's **TAUREAN PRINCE** and St. Joe's **DEANDRE' BEMBRY**.

—Eric Walden



### HAWKS ROSTER

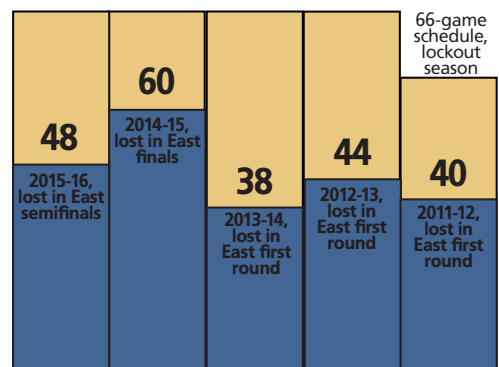
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Mike Scott	F	6-8	237	Virginia
Dennis Schroder	G	6-1	172	Germany
Tim Hardaway	G	6-6	205	Michigan
Thabo Sefolosha	F	6-7	220	Switzerland
Kyle Korver	G	6-7	212	Creighton
Tiago Splitter	C	6-11	245	Brazil
Mike Muscala	F	6-11	240	Bucknell
Paul Millsap	F	6-8	246	Louisiana Tech
Walter Tavares	C	7-3	260	Cape Verde
Kent Bazemore	G	6-5	201	Old Dominion
Dwight Howard	C	6-11	265	Atlanta Christian HS
Malcolm Delaney	G	6-3	190	Virginia Tech
Taurean Prince	F	6-8	220	Baylor
DeAndre' Bembry	F	6-6	210	St. Joseph's
Jarrett Jack	G	6-3	200	Georgia Tech
Matt Costello	F	6-9	245	Michigan St.
Kris Humphries	F	6-9	235	Minnesota
Ryan Kelly	F	6-11	230	Duke
Will Bynum	G	6-0	185	Jason Tech
<b>Head Coach » Mike Budenholzer</b>				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Paul Millsap	81	32.7	.470	.319	.757	9.0	3.3	1.8	1.7	2.4	2.9	17.1
Jeff Teague	79	28.5	.439	.400	.837	2.7	5.9	1.2	0.3	2.8	2.1	15.7
Al Horford	82	32.1	.505	.344	.798	7.3	3.2	0.8	1.5	1.3	2.0	15.2
Kent Bazemore	75	27.8	.441	.357	.815	5.1	2.3	1.3	0.5	1.8	2.3	11.6
Dennis Schroder	80	20.3	.421	.322	.791	2.6	4.4	0.9	0.1	2.3	1.7	11.0
Kyle Korver	80	30.0	.435	.398	.833	3.3	2.1	0.8	0.4	1.2	2.0	9.2
Thabo Sefolosha	75	23.4	.505	.339	.626	4.5	1.4	1.1	0.5	0.9	1.5	6.4
Tim Hardaway	51	16.9	.430	.338	.893	1.7	1.0	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.9	6.4
Kris Humphries	21	14.0	.465	.258	.711	3.4	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.7	2.1	6.4
Mike Scott	75	15.3	.468	.392	.794	2.7	1.0	0.3	0.2	0.6	1.4	6.2
Tiago Splitter	36	16.1	.523	.000	.813	3.3	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.7	2.0	5.6
Shelvin Mack	24	7.5	.421	.148	.750	0.9	1.6	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.3	3.9
Mike Muscala	60	9.4	.500	.308	.795	2.0	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.5	1.2	3.3
Lamar Patterson	35	11.3	.350	.245	.727	1.4	1.1	0.3	0.1	0.7	1.3	2.4
Justin Holiday	26	10.1	.329	.222	.500	1.0	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.8	2.4
Walter Tavares	11	6.6	.579	—	.375	1.9	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.7	2.3	2.3
Kirk Hinrich	11	6.9	.182	.167	—	1.1	1.3	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.5

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Paul Millsap	.470	.319	.757	10.0	3.6	2.0	1.9	2.6	3.2	18.8
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Lamar Patterson	.350	.245	.727	4.6	3.6	0.8	0.2	2.1	4.1	7.7
Justin Holiday	.329	.222	.500	3.7	1.5	1.8	0.5	1.8	2.9	8.6
Walter Tavares	.579	—	.375	10.4	1.5	0.5	3.0	2.5	3.9	12.3
Kirk Hinrich	.182	.167	—	5.7	6.6	0.9	0.5	1.4	0.5	2.4

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Walker, Batum give Hornets some buzz again



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Walker's breakthrough

Since being selected No. 9 overall by Charlotte in 2011, point guard **KEMBA WALKER** (above) has been a nice player but hardly a transcendent one. This past season, though, he was the primary force behind the Hornets' playoff push (when they went 21-8 down the stretch), setting career highs in ppg (20.9), FG% (a still-poor 42.7), 3P% (a by-far-his-best 37.1) and PER (20.8). He also demonstrated a greater ability to impose his will on teams, as any Jazz fan who saw him drop 52 points on Utah can attest.

### A hefty price for continuity

Charlotte acquired **NICOLAS BATUM** (right) from Portland for the low price of veteran guard Gerald Henderson and apparent lottery bust Noah Vonleh, though many worried it was a one-year rental, given his expiring contract. After his all-around game helped the Hornets flourish (his 5.8 apg led the team), the decision was made to do whatever it took to keep him around. He didn't come cheap, though, signing a five-year, \$120 million deal.

### Bigs still a work in progress

Despite using the No. 4 overall selection in 2013 on **CODY ZELLER** and the No. 9 pick last year on **FRANK KAMINSKY**, the Hornets still gave minutes to **SPENCER HAWES** last year and brought in **ROY HIBBERT** this summer despite his career-worst season with the Lakers. It's telling that Charlotte's best "big" is **MARVIN WILLIAMS**, whose career has been resurrected as a small-ball stretch-four. He averaged 11.7 ppg and shot 40.2% from 3.

—Eric Walden



### HORNETS ROSTER

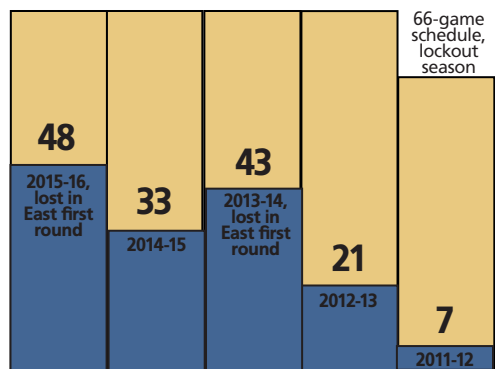
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Michael Kidd-Gilchrist	F	6-7	232	Kentucky
Kemba Walker	G	6-1	172	Connecticut
Cody Zeller	F	7-0	240	Indiana
Jeremy Lamb	G	6-5	185	Connecticut
Spencer Hawes	C	7-1	245	Washington
Frank Kaminsky	F	7-0	242	Wisconsin
Marco Belinelli	G	6-5	210	Italy
Aaron Harrison	G	6-6	210	Kentucky
Nicolas Batum	F-G	6-8	200	France
Ramon Sessions	G	6-3	190	Nevada
Roy Hibbert	C	7-2	270	Georgetown
Marvin Williams	F	6-9	237	North Carolina
Brian Roberts	G	6-1	173	Dayton
Christian Wood	F	6-11	220	UNLV
Mike Tobey	C	7-0	260	Virginia
Treveon Graham	G	6-6	220	VCU
Andrew Andrews	G	6-2	200	Washington
Rasheed Sulaimon	G	6-4	190	Maryland
Perry Ellis	F	6-8	225	Kansas
<b>Head Coach » Steve Clifford</b>				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Kemba Walker	81	35.6	.427	.371	.847	4.4	5.2	1.6	0.5	2.1	1.4	20.9
Nicolas Batum	70	35.0	.426	.348	.849	6.1	5.8	0.9	0.6	2.9	1.6	14.9
Michael Kidd-Gilchrist	7	29.3	.541	.429	.690	6.4	1.3	0.4	0.4	1.1	1.3	12.7
Al Jefferson	47	23.3	.485	—	.649	6.4	1.5	0.6	0.9	0.7	2.5	12.0
Marvin Williams	81	28.9	.452	.402	.833	6.4	1.4	0.7	1.0	0.8	1.6	11.7
Jeremy Lin	78	26.3	.412	.336	.815	3.2	3.0	0.7	0.5	1.9	2.1	11.7
Courtney Lee	28	30.2	.445	.392	.885	3.1	2.1	1.2	0.4	0.8	2.0	8.9
Jeremy Lamb	66	18.6	.451	.309	.727	3.8	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.8	1.6	8.8
Cody Zeller	73	24.3	.529	.100	.754	6.2	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.9	2.8	8.7
Frank Kaminsky	81	21.1	.410	.337	.730	4.1	1.2	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.6	7.5
P.J. Hairston	48	19.5	.359	.314	.810	2.7	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.5	2.2	6.0
Spencer Hawes	57	18.2	.405	.373	.831	4.3	1.9	0.4	0.5	1.0	1.9	6.0
Troy Daniels	43	11.1	.476	.484	.556	1.3	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.6	0.9	5.6
Brian Roberts	30	11.1	.443	.333	.919	1.0	1.3	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.8	4.8
Tyler Hansbrough	44	7.8	.451	.667	.585	2.0	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.3	2.4
Jorge Gutierrez	12	5.3	.545	.000	.909	0.6	1.4	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.3	1.8
Aaron Harrison	21	4.4	.263	.300	.417	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.9

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Kemba Walker	.427	.371	.847	4.5	5.3	1.6	0.5	2.1	1.4	21.1
Nicolas Batum	.426	.348	.849	6.3	5.9	1.0	0.6	3.0	1.7	15.4
Marvin Williams	.452	.402	.833	8.0	1.7	0.9	1.2	1.0	2.0	14.6
Jeremy Lin	.412	.336	.815	4.4	4.1	1.0	0.7	2.6	2.9	16.1
Cody Zeller	.529	.100	.754	9.2	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.4	4.1	12.9
Frank Kaminsky	.410	.337	.730	7.1	2.1	0.8	0.9	1.2	2.7	12.8
Jeremy Lamb	.451	.309	.727	7.4	2.3	1.2	0.9	1.5	3.1	17.0
Al Jefferson	.485	—	.649	9.9	2.3	1.0	1.3	1.1	3.8	18.5
Spencer Hawes	.405	.373	.831	8.5	3.8	0.8	0.9	2.0	3.9	11.8
P.J. Hairston	.359	.314	.810	4.9	1.1	0.9	0.3	0.9	4.1	11.0
Courtney Lee	.445	.392	.885	3.7	2.6	1.4	0.5	1.0	2.3	10.7
Troy Daniels	.476	.484	.556	4.3	1.6	0.8	0.2	1.8	3.0	18.3
Tyler Hansbrough	.451	.667	.585	9.3	0.8	1.3	0.7	1.3	5.8	10.9
Brian Roberts	.443	.333	.919	3.1	4.1	0.8	0.1	1.7	2.5	15.7
Michael Kidd-Gilchrist	.541	.429	.690	7.9	1.6	0.5	0.5	1.4	1.6	15.6
Aaron Harrison	.263	.300	.417	5.8	0.8	2.3	0.0	1.5	3.9	7.0
Jorge Gutierrez	.545	.000	.909	4.0	9.7	1.7	0.0	3.4	1.7	12.6

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Whiteside's dark side may emerge with Heat



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Second thoughts?

On the one hand, **HASSAN WHITESIDE** (above) parlayed a season of 14.2 ppg, 11.8 rpg, a league-leading 3.7 bpg, 60.6 FG% and an astounding 25.7 Player Efficiency Rating into a four-year, \$98 million deal to remain with the Heat. On the other, right after he elected to stay, the team lost Dwyane Wade, Joe Johnson, Luol Deng and Gerald Green in free agency, and later announced that **CHRIS BOSH** would not return due to blood clots. Given Whiteside's history of volatility, you have to wonder how he'll react to being on a team that likely will be much worse than he anticipated.

### New second fiddle

Guard **GORAN DRAGIC** (right) is another player who will be well-compensated to go through what may well be a miserable season. Then again, after forcing his way out of Phoenix in 2014 due to being unhappy with his role, perhaps he's relishing the chance to build upon last year's averages of 14.1 ppg and 5.8 apg.

### A most unlikely \$50 million man

"**TYLER JOHNSON**" sounds like someone you went to junior high with, not a guy who got a four-year, \$50 million deal as an NBA restricted free agent. His 8.7 ppg and 38.0 3% convinced the Nets to make him a big offer to try and lure him away, and convinced the Heat ultimately to match it. Not bad for a guy who went undrafted out of Fresno State.



—Eric Walden

### HEAT ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Josh McRoberts	F	6-10	240	Duke
Justise Winslow	F	6-7	225	Duke
Goran Dragic	G	6-3	190	Croatia
Luke Babbitt	F	6-9	225	Nevada
Josh Richardson	G	6-6	200	Tennessee
Briante Weber	G	6-2	165	VCU
Tyler Johnson	G	6-4	186	Fresno St.
Hassan Whiteside	C	7-0	265	Marshall
Wayne Ellington	G	6-4	200	North Carolina
Derrick Williams	F	6-8	240	Arizona
Udonis Haslem	F	6-8	235	Florida
James Johnson	F	6-9	250	Wake Forest
Willie Reed	F	6-10	220	St. Louis
Okaro White	F	6-8	204	Florida State
Stefan Jankovic	F	6-11	234	Hawaii
Rodney McGruder	G	6-4	205	Kansas St.
Dion Waiters	G	6-4	225	Syracuse
Beno Udrih	G	6-3	205	Croatia
Keith Benson	C	6-11	240	Oakland

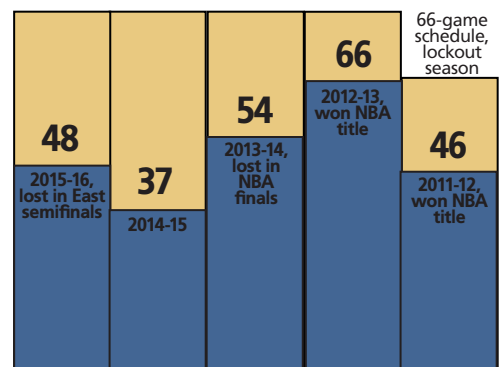
**Head Coach »** Eric Spoelstra

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Chris Bosh	53	33.5	.467	.365	.795	7.4	2.4	0.7	0.6	1.5	1.9	19.1
Dwyane Wade	74	30.5	.456	.159	.793	4.1	4.6	1.1	0.6	2.7	1.6	19.0
Hassan Whiteside	73	29.1	.606	—	.650	11.8	0.4	0.6	3.7	1.9	2.8	14.2
Goran Dragic	72	32.8	.477	.312	.727	3.8	5.8	1.0	0.2	2.6	2.6	14.1
Joe Johnson	24	32.0	.518	.417	.765	2.8	3.6	0.9	0.1	1.8	1.9	13.4
Luol Deng	74	32.4	.455	.344	.755	6.0	1.9	1.0	0.4	1.1	1.6	12.3
Gerald Green	69	22.6	.392	.323	.783	2.4	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.7	1.8	8.9
Tyler Johnson	36	24.0	.486	.380	.797	3.0	2.2	0.7	0.4	1.3	1.8	8.7
Josh Richardson	52	21.3	.452	.461	.667	2.1	1.4	0.7	0.5	0.7	2.1	6.6
Justise Winslow	78	28.6	.422	.276	.684	5.2	1.5	0.9	0.3	1.2	2.4	6.4
Amar'e Stoudemire	52	14.7	.566	—	.746	4.3	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.9	1.8	5.8
Mario Chalmers	6	20.0	.313	.091	.923	2.3	3.2	1.3	0.2	1.5	2.7	5.5
Beno Udrih	36	16.3	.434	.333	.882	1.8	2.5	0.3	0.0	1.2	1.1	4.4
Josh McRoberts	42	14.2	.372	.245	.700	2.5	1.9	0.4	0.2	0.7	1.6	3.6
Briante Weber	1	3.0	1.000	—	—	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0
Chris Andersen	7	5.1	.400	.400	.750	1.3	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.6	1.9
Udonis Haslem	37	7.0	.377	.111	.750	2.0	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.7	1.6
Jarnell Stokes	5	2.8	.600	—	.500	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	1.4
James Ennis	3	2.3	—	—	—	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Chris Bosh	.467	.365	.795	7.9	2.6	0.7	0.7	1.6	2.0	20.4
Dwyane Wade	.456	.159	.793	4.8	5.5	1.3	0.7	3.2	1.8	22.5
Hassan Whiteside	.606	—	.650	14.7	0.5	0.7	4.6	2.3	3.4	17.6
Goran Dragic	.477	.312	.727	4.2	6.4	1.1	0.3	2.8	2.9	15.5
Joe Johnson	.518	.417	.765	3.2	4.0	1.0	0.1	2.0	2.2	15.0
Luol Deng	.455	.344	.755	6.7	2.1	1.1	0.4	1.2	1.8	13.7
Gerald Green	.392	.323	.783	3.8	1.3	0.9	0.4	1.1	2.8	14.2
Tyler Johnson	.486	.380	.797	4.5	3.3	1.0	0.6	2.0	2.8	13.1
Josh Richardson	.452	.461	.667	3.5	2.4	1.2	0.8	1.1	3.5	11.1
Justise Winslow	.422	.276	.684	6.5	1.9	1.1	0.4	1.5	3.0	8.1
Amar'e Stoudemire	.566	—	.746	10.5	1.3	0.9	1.9	2.2	4.3	14.2
Mario Chalmers	.313	.091	.923	4.2	5.7	2.4	0.3	2.7	4.8	9.9
Beno Udrih	.434	.333	.882	3.9	5.5	0.7	0.0	2.6	2.5	9.7
Josh McRoberts	.372	.245	.700	6.4	4.9	1.1	0.4	1.8	4.1	9.1
Briante Weber	1.000	—	—	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.0	24.0
Chris Andersen	.400	.400	.750	9.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	4.0	13.0
Udonis Haslem	.377	.111	.750	10.4	1.9	0.7	0.3	0.7	3.5	8.2
Jarnell Stokes	.600	—	.500	5.1	2.6	2.6	0.0	0.0	2.6	18.0
James Ennis	—	—	—	0.0	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.1	0.0

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Vogel needs magic solution for Magic's lineup



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Do the pieces fit?

Orlando is frequently praised for coming away with talented players in the draft and frequently criticized for how they fit together. The roster overlaps remain an issue for new coach **FRANK VOGEL** to solve. **NIKOLA VUCEVIC** (above) and newly-acquired **SERGE IBAKA** (right) are the presumptive big men, but the team splurged \$70 million on **BISMACK BIYOMBO**, and **AARON GORDON** and **JEFF GREEN**, while often shoehorned in at the three, are both better suited for the four.

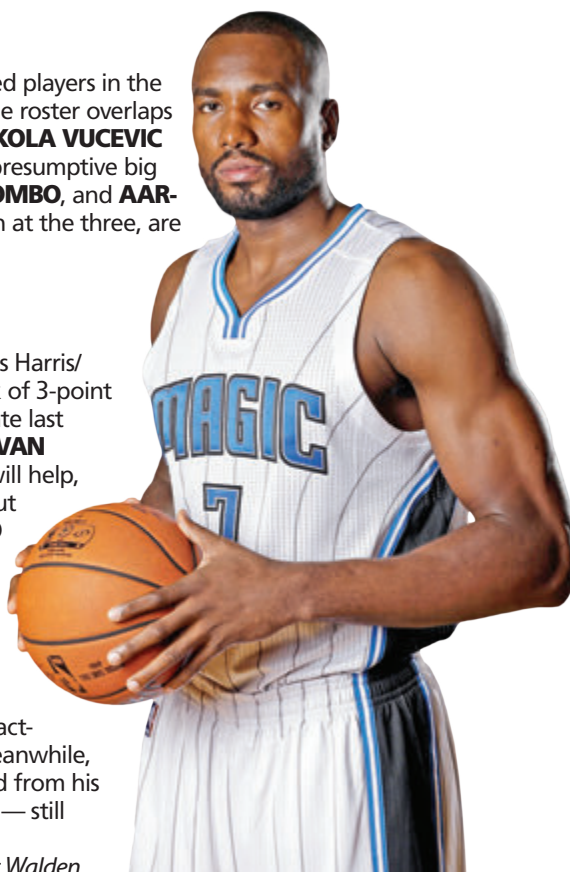
### Finding some space

A huge problem last year with running out a Vučević/Tobias Harris/Gordon/Victor Oladipo/**ELFRID PAYTON** lineup was its lack of 3-point ability. How Vogel deploys his lineups this year could alleviate last year's lack of spacing. Replacing the traded Oladipo with **EVAN FOURNIER** (just re-signed to a five-year, \$85 million deal) will help, as Fournier hit 40% of his 3s. Leaving Gordon and Green out of the three-spot and giving last year's lottery pick, **MARIO HEZONJA**, more than the 17.9 mpg he got under Scott Skiles will be big, as well.

### Protecting the paint

Part of the reason Orlando traded for Ibaka and signed Biyombo is that, for all his offensive talents, Vučević is not exactly a rim-protector, averaging 1.1 bpg last year. Biyombo, meanwhile, averaged 1.6 in 22 mpg, while Ibaka — though far-removed from his league-leading totals of 3.7 bpg in 2011-12 and 3.0 in '12-13 — still averaged 1.9 last season.

— Eric Walden



### MAGIC ROSTER

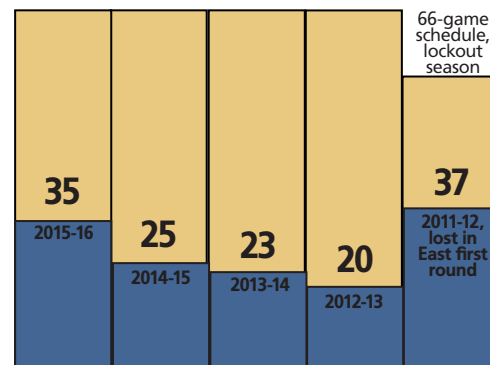
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Jodie Meeks	G	6-4	208	Kentucky
Serge Ibaka	F	6-10	245	Congo
Nikola Vučević	C	7-0	260	USC
C.J. Wilcox	G	6-5	195	Washington
Aaron Gordon	F	6-9	220	Arizona
Elfrid Payton	G	6-4	185	La.-Lafayette
Mario Hezonja	F	6-8	215	Croatia
C.J. Watson	G	6-2	175	Tennessee
Bismack Biyombo	C	6-9	245	Congo
Jeff Green	F	6-9	235	Georgetown
D.J. Augustin	G	6-0	183	Texas
Evan Fournier	F	6-7	205	France
Stephen Zimmerman	C	7-0	240	UNLV
Arinze Onuaku	F	6-9	275	Syracuse
Damjan Rudez	F	6-10	228	Croatia
Nick Johnson	G	6-3	202	Arizona
Kevin Murphy	G	6-6	185	Tennessee Tech
Cliff Alexander	F	6-8	240	Kansas
Branden Dawson	F	6-6	225	Michigan St.
<b>Head Coach »</b>				Frank Vogel

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Nikola Vučević	65	31.3	.510	.222	.753	8.9	2.8	0.8	1.1	1.9	2.7	18.2
Victor Oladipo	72	33.0	.438	.348	.830	4.8	3.9	1.6	0.8	2.1	2.4	16.0
Evan Fournier	79	32.5	.462	.400	.836	2.8	2.7	1.2	0.0	1.7	2.7	15.4
Tobias Harris	49	32.9	.464	.311	.784	7.0	2.0	1.0	0.6	1.6	1.9	13.7
Elfrid Payton	73	29.4	.436	.326	.589	3.6	6.4	1.2	0.3	2.4	2.2	10.7
Aaron Gordon	78	23.9	.473	.296	.668	6.5	1.6	0.8	0.7	0.8	2.0	9.2
Ersan Ilyasova	22	20.3	.418	.409	.711	5.5	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.5	2.3	8.1
C.J. Watson	33	19.9	.343	.292	.872	2.0	2.7	0.6	0.2	0.8	1.5	4.3
Brandon Jennings	25	18.1	.366	.346	.750	2.0	4.0	0.7	0.2	1.4	1.3	7.0
Mario Hezonja	79	17.9	.433	.349	.907	2.2	1.4	0.5	0.2	1.2	1.6	6.1
Channing Frye	44	17.1	.435	.397	.905	3.2	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.6	5.2
Jason Smith	76	15.5	.485	.250	.806	2.9	0.8	0.4	0.9	0.8	2.1	7.2
Andrew Nicholson	56	14.7	.471	.360	.785	3.6	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.2	6.9
Dewayne Dedmon	58	12.2	.559	—	.750	3.9	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.6	1.9	4.4
Shabazz Napier	55	10.9	.338	.327	.733	1.0	1.8	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.7	3.7
Devyn Marble	28	8.9	.296	.250	.417	1.4	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.3	0.9	2.1
Keith Appling	5	5.4	.250	.000	1.000	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.6	1.0	1.2

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
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Elfrid Payton	.436	.326	.589	4.4	7.9	1.5	0.3	3.0	2.7	13.1
Nikola Vučević	.510	.222	.753	10.2	3.2	0.9	1.2	2.2	3.1	20.9
Aaron Gordon	.473	.296	.668	9.8	2.5	1.1	1.1	1.3	3.0	13.9
Tobias Harris	.464	.311	.784	7.6	2.2	1.1	0.6	1.7	2.0	15.0
Mario Hezonja	.433	.349	.907	4.5	2.8	1.0	0.4	2.5	3.2	12.2
Jason Smith	.485	.250	.806	6.7	1.9	1.0	2.0	1.7	5.0	16.6
Andrew Nicholson	.471	.360	.785	8.8	1.1	0.4	1.0	1.8	3.0	16.8
Channing Frye	.435	.397	.905	6.7	2.1	1.0	1.0	1.4	3.4	10.9
Dewayne Dedmon	.559	—	.750	11.6	0.7	1.1	2.3	1.6	5.6	13.0
C.J. Watson	.343	.292	.872	3.6	4.8	1.0	0.3	1.4	2.7	7.8
Shabazz Napier	.338	.327	.733	3.3	5.8	1.4	0.1	2.8	2.3	12.2
Brandon Jennings	.366	.346	.750	4.0	8.0	1.4	0.4	2.8	2.6	13.9
Ersan Ilyasova	.418	.409	.711	9.7	1.0	1.1	0.5	1.0	4.1	14.3
Devyn Marble	.296	.250	.417	5.5	1.7	1.9	0.1	1.0	3.6	8.7
Keith Appling	.250	.000	1.000	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.0	4.0	6.7	8.0

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS





## Wizards need to make dissension disappear



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Mo' money, mo' problems

Guards **JOHN WALL** (above) and **BRADLEY BEAL** (right) are said to have a frosty relationship, which observers cited as a factor in the Wizards' decline last year. The issue was apparently exacerbated by this summer's cap spike, which resulted in Beal getting a five-year, \$127 million deal despite never averaging more than the 17.4 ppg he put up last year. Wall, who will make about \$5 million less this year than his back-court mate, is said to be less than happy about it. Welcome to Washington, **SCOTT BROOKS!**

### A fresh start for Burke

**TREY BURKE** never became the franchise point guard the Jazz hoped for when they traded for him in the 2013 draft. In Washington, he won't have that kind of pressure. Though his shooting woes are well-known at this point, he did improve his field-goal shooting by 4.5% and his 3s by 2.6% last year.

### A potential bright spot

Here's some possible fun for an otherwise dour franchise: **TOMAS SATORANSKY** is not a name casual fans will know, but that may change. Drafted in 2012, the Czech Republic native will debut this year. His role may be small, but he's bound to be a highlight-reel staple, given his high-flying game. If he is not in the 2017 Slam Dunk contest, something is very wrong.



— Eric Walden

### WIZARDS ROSTER

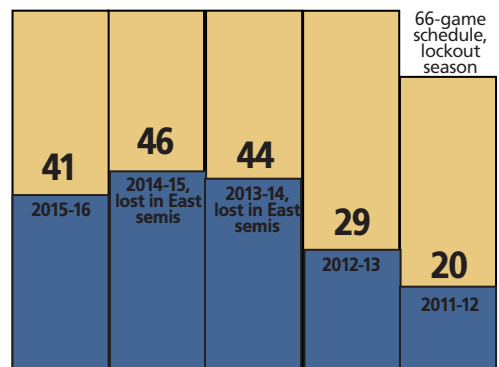
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Trey Burke	G	6-1	191	Michigan
Marcin Gortat	C	6-11	240	Poland
Markieff Morris	F	6-10	245	Kansas
John Wall	G	6-4	195	Kentucky
Otto Porter	F	6-8	198	Georgetown
Kelly Oubre Jr.	F	6-7	205	Kansas
Ian Mahinmi	C	6-11	250	France
Andrew Nicholson	F	6-9	250	St. Bonaventure
Jason Smith	F	7-0	245	Colorado St.
Daniel Ochefu	C	6-11	245	Villanova
Tomas Satoransky	G	6-7	210	Czech Republic
Jarell Eddie	G-F	6-7	218	Virginia Tech
Bradley Beal	G	6-5	207	Florida
Marcus Thornton	G	6-4	205	LSU
Sheldon McClellan	G	6-5	200	Miami
Danuel House	G	6-7	207	Texas A&M
Casper Ware	G	5-10	175	Long Beach St.
Johnny O'Bryant	F-C	6-9	257	LSU
<b>Head Coach</b>	»	Scott Brooks		

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
John Wall	77	36.2	.424	.351	.791	4.9	10.2	1.9	0.8	4.1	2.1	19.9
Bradley Beal	55	31.1	.449	.387	.767	3.4	2.9	1.0	0.2	2.0	2.1	17.4
Marcin Gortat	75	30.1	.567	.000	.705	9.9	1.4	0.6	1.3	1.6	2.6	13.5
Markieff Morris	27	26.4	.467	.316	.764	5.9	1.4	0.9	0.6	1.7	3.0	12.4
Otto Porter	75	30.3	.473	.367	.754	5.2	1.6	1.4	0.4	0.9	2.2	11.6
Ramon Sessions	82	20.3	.473	.324	.756	2.5	2.9	0.6	0.1	1.4	1.2	9.9
Gary Neal	40	20.2	.465	.410	.855	2.1	1.2	0.5	0.0	0.7	1.4	9.8
Nene Hilario	57	19.2	.544	.000	.578	4.5	1.7	0.9	0.5	1.3	2.7	9.2
Marcus Thornton	14	16.0	.393	.333	.762	2.5	1.4	0.9	0.1	0.8	1.2	8.4
Jared Dudley	81	25.9	.478	.420	.735	3.5	2.1	0.9	0.2	1.0	2.3	7.9
Garrett Temple	80	24.4	.398	.345	.728	2.7	1.8	0.9	0.2	0.8	2.4	7.3
Kris Humphries	28	16.6	.405	.343	.935	4.1	0.6	0.1	0.5	0.7	1.5	6.4
Alan Anderson	13	14.8	.356	.324	.733	2.1	1.1	0.3	0.1	0.2	1.9	5.0
J.J. Hickson	15	8.7	.543	.000	.432	3.0	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.6	0.8	4.6
Kelly Oubre	63	10.7	.427	.316	.633	2.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.5	1.6	3.7
Drew Gooden	30	10.2	.320	.171	.643	2.8	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	1.3	2.7
Jarell Eddie	26	5.7	.308	.319	.000	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	2.4
DeJuan Blair	29	7.5	.412	.000	.385	2.0	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.5	1.8	2.1
Ryan Hollins	5	9.6	.571	—	—	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.6	0.8	1.6

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
John Wall	.424	.351	.791	4.9	10.2	1.9	0.8	4.1	2.1	19.8
Otto Porter	.473	.367	.754	6.2	1.9	1.7	0.5	1.1	2.5	13.8
Marcin Gortat	.567	.000	.705	11.8	1.7	0.7	1.5	1.9	3.1	16.1
Jared Dudley	.478	.420	.735	4.9	2.9	1.3	0.3	1.4	3.3	10.9
Garrett Temple	.398	.345	.728	3.9	2.6	1.3	0.3	1.2	3.6	10.7
Bradley Beal	.449	.387	.767	4.0	3.4	1.1	0.2	2.4	2.5	20.2
Ramon Sessions	.473	.324	.756	4.4	5.2	1.0	0.1	2.5	2.2	17.5
Nene Hilario	.544	.000	.578	8.5	3.2	1.8	0.9	2.5	5.1	17.3
Gary Neal	.465	.410	.855	3.7	2.1	0.9	0.0	1.3	2.5	17.4
Markieff Morris	.467	.316	.764	8.0	1.9	1.3	0.9	2.3	4.0	16.9
Kelly Oubre	.427	.316	.633	7.1	0.7	1.2	0.4	1.8	5.4	12.7
Kris Humphries	.405	.343	.935	8.9	1.2	0.2	1.1	1.5	3.2	13.9
Drew Gooden	.320	.171	.643	10.0	1.5	0.9	1.3	1.5	4.7	9.7
Marcus Thornton	.393	.333	.762	5.6	3.1	2.1	0.2	1.8	2.7	19.0
DeJuan Blair	.412	.000	.385	9.4	1.8	1.3	0.3	2.5	8.8	10.1
Alan Anderson	.356	.324	.733	5.1	2.6	0.7	0.2	0.4	4.7	12.2
Jarell Eddie	.308	.319	1.000	5.6	1.2	1.2	0.2	0.2	1.2	15.4
J.J. Hickson	.543	.000	.432	12.4	1.9	1.4	0.5	2.5	3.3	19.0
Ryan Hollins	.571	—	—	8.2	0.0	0.0	0.7	2.3	3.0	6.0

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Barnes arrives, but Mavs are still Dirk's team



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Harrison Barnes in the spotlight

For years, we've heard that **HARRISON BARNES** (right) could be a star, but his touches were limited in Golden State by Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson. Now armed with a \$94 million dollar contract, this is Barnes' chance. He won't get all the touches he wants, but he's got to develop into a solid number two option for the Mavericks if this team wants to see success this season. After all, **DIRK NOWITZKI** (above) is still in uniform ...

### ... and speaking of Dirk ...

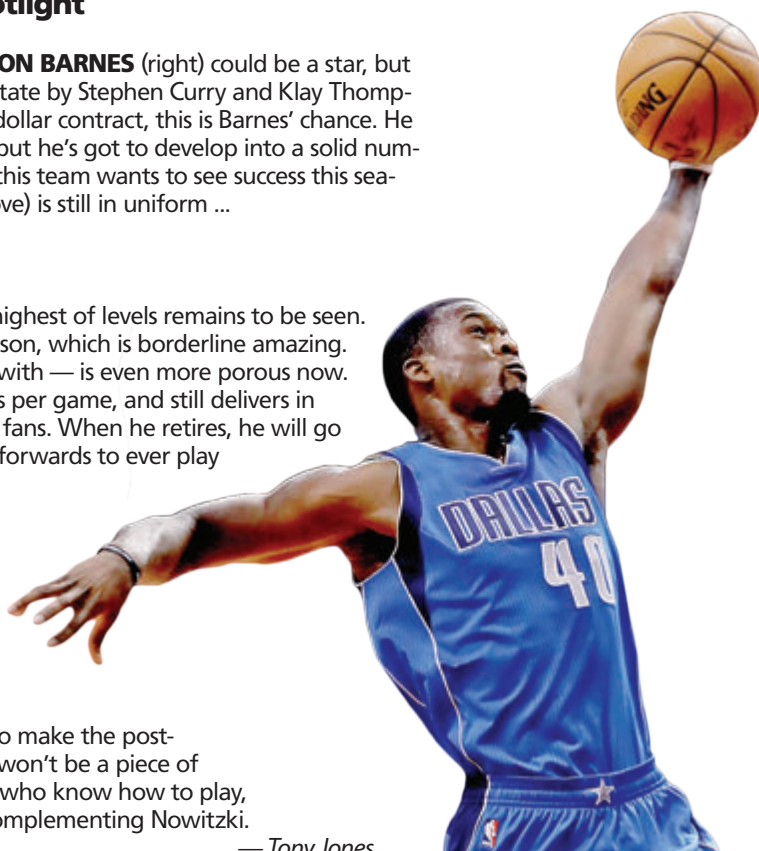
How long Nowitzki can play at the highest of levels remains to be seen. He was still an All-Star talent last season, which is borderline amazing. His defense — never great to begin with — is even more porous now. However, he's still good for 18 points per game, and still delivers in the clutch. Enjoy Dirk while you can, fans. When he retires, he will go down as one of the greatest power forwards to ever play the game.

### Former Jazzmen get their time

#### DERON WILLIAMS, WESLEY MATTHEWS and DEVIN HARRIS

are all on the same team. The guard play was average last season for the Mavs. It must be better this season to make the post-season, which given age and injury, won't be a piece of cake. Each of the three are veterans who know how to play, and they are still good in terms of complementing Nowitzki.

— Tony Jones



### MAVERICKS ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Andrew Bogut	C	7-0	260	Utah
Devin Harris	G	6-3	192	Wisconsin
Justin Anderson	G	6-6	228	Virginia
Wesley Matthews	G	6-5	220	Marquette
J.J. Barea	G	6-0	185	Northeastern
Salah Mejri	C	7-1	245	Turkey
Harrison Barnes	F	6-8	210	North Carolina
Deron Williams	G	6-3	200	Illinois
Dwight Powell	F	6-11	240	Stanford
A.J. Hammons	C	7-0	250	Purdue
Dorian Finney-Smith	F	6-8	220	Florida
Nicolas Brussino	G-F	6-7	195	Argentina
Jonathan Gibson	G	6-2	185	New Mexico St.
Dirk Nowitzki	F	7-0	245	Germany
Seth Curry	G	6-2	185	Duke
Quincy Acy	F	6-7	240	Baylor
Kyle Collinsworth	G	6-6	215	BYU
Jameel Warney	F	6-8	260	Stony Brook
Keith Hornsby	G	6-4	210	LSU
C.J. Williams	G	6-5	225	N.C. State

Head Coach » Rick Carlisle

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Player	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Dirk Nowitzki	75	31.5	.448	.368	.893	6.5	1.8	0.7	0.7	1.1	2.1	18.3
Deron Williams	65	32.4	.414	.344	.869	2.9	5.8	0.9	0.2	2.3	2.4	14.1
Chandler Parsons	61	29.5	.492	.414	.684	4.7	2.8	0.8	0.3	1.6	1.9	13.7
Wesley Matthews	78	33.9	.388	.360	.863	3.1	1.9	1.0	0.2	1.0	2.3	12.5
J.J. Barea	74	22.5	.446	.385	.771	2.1	4.1	0.4	0.0	1.5	1.5	10.9
Raymond Felton	80	27.4	.406	.282	.847	3.2	3.6	0.9	0.2	1.5	1.8	9.5
Zaza Pachulia	76	26.4	.466	.000	.768	9.4	1.7	0.8	0.3	1.6	2.4	8.6
David Lee	25	17.3	.636	—	.738	7.0	1.2	0.4	0.6	1.1	2.5	8.5
Devin Harris	64	20.0	.447	.329	.721	2.2	1.8	0.9	0.2	1.0	1.9	7.6
Dwight Powell	69	14.4	.493	.125	.739	4.0	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.6	1.7	5.8
JaVale McGee	34	10.9	.575	.000	.500	3.9	0.1	0.1	0.8	0.6	1.4	5.1
Charlie Villanueva	62	10.7	.382	.273	.917	2.5	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.5	1.1	5.1
Justin Anderson	55	11.8	.406	.265	.800	2.4	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.8	3.8
Salah Mejri	34	11.7	.628	.000	.587	3.6	0.3	0.2	1.1	0.7	1.6	3.7
John Jenkins	21	9.2	.414	.158	.889	1.0	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.5	3.3
Jeremy Evans	30	8.4	.542	.250	.714	1.8	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.6	2.4

Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Dirk Nowitzki	.448	.368	.893	7.4	2.0	0.8	0.8	1.3	2.5	20.9
Deron Williams	.414	.344	.869	3.2	6.5	1.0	0.2	2.6	2.6	15.7
Chandler Parsons	.492	.414	.684	5.7	3.4	0.9	0.4	1.9	2.3	16.7
Wesley Matthews	.388	.360	.863	3.2	2.1	1.1	0.2	1.1	2.4	13.3
J.J. Barea	.446	.385	.771	3.3	6.5	0.6	0.0	2.4	2.4	17.4
Raymond Felton	.406	.282	.847	4.2	4.7	1.1	0.2	2.0	2.3	12.5
Zaza Pachulia	.466	.000	.768	12.9	2.3	1.1	0.4	2.1	3.3	11.7
David Lee	.636	—	.738	14.5	2.5	0.8	1.2	2.3	5.2	17.7
Devin Harris	.447	.329	.721	3.9	3.3	1.7	0.4	1.9	3.5	13.7
Dwight Powell	.493	.125	.739	9.9	1.6	1.3	0.9	1.5	4.3	14.5
JaVale McGee	.575	.000	.500	12.9	0.3	0.5	2.5	2.0	4.8	16.7
Charlie Villanueva	.382	.273	.917	8.2	1.3	1.0	0.8	1.7	3.8	17.3
Justin Anderson	.406	.265	.800	7.3	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.3	2.5	11.6
Salah Mejri	.628	.000	.587	11.2	0.9	0.7	3.3	2.1	4.9	11.3
John Jenkins	.414	.158	.889	4.1	1.7	0.6	0.0	2.1	2.1	12.9
Jeremy Evans	.542	.250	.714	7.7	0.3	0.9	1.3	1.0	2.7	10.2

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS

Year	Round	66-game schedule, lockout season
2015-16	lost in West first round	42
2014-15	lost in West first round	50
2013-14	lost in West first round	49
2012-13	lost in West first round	41
2011-12	lost in West first round	36

## Fresh start, fast pace for D'Antoni's Rockets



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Good decision on the bench

**MIKE D'ANTONI** coming in, giving the ball to **JAMES HARDEN** (right) and making him the point guard was a wise choice. It moves **PAT BEVERLEY** to the bench, and gives Harden the freedom and space to make plays for himself and others. Few are better with the ball than Harden, who can score and pass the ball with the best of them. And with the shooting Houston has surrounding Harden, this offense has explosive potential.

### Capela steps into the center role

With Dwight Howard out of town, **CLINT CAPELA** (above) is now the starting center. He's not the defender and rebounder Howard is. But he's exceptionally athletic, can block shots, and complements Harden offensively better than Howard. Capela is young, eager to prove himself. He's going to get plenty of chances this season.

### A chance to turn the corner

After the disappointment of last year, the Rockets have renewed vigor and hope. **RYAN ANDERSON** and **ERIC GORDON** bring additional shooting into the offense. **TREVOR ARIZA** is around to lend his steady hand. Here's the question: Can this group play enough defense to make the postseason? The lack of defense was one of Houston's biggest issues last season. Being better on that end would be a good start for the Rockets.

— Tony Jones



### ROCKETS ROSTER

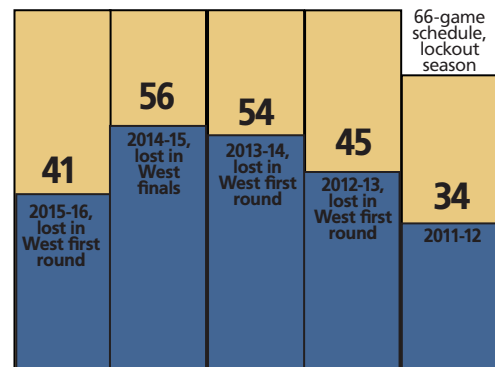
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
James Harden	G	6-5	220	Arizona St.
Trevor Ariza	F	6-8	215	UCLA
Tyler Ennis	G	6-3	194	Syracuse
Clint Capela	C	6-10	240	Switzerland
Sam Dekker	F	6-9	230	Wisconsin
Patrick Beverley	G	6-1	185	Arkansas
Corey Brewer	F	6-9	186	Florida
K.J. McDaniels	G	6-6	205	Clemson
Montrezl Harrell	F	6-8	240	Louisville
Ryan Anderson	F	6-10	240	California
Eric Gordon	G	6-4	215	Indiana
Nene	C	6-11	250	Brazil
Chinanu Onuaku	F	6-10	245	Louisville
Pablo Prigioni	G	6-3	185	Argentina
Bobby Brown	G	6-2	175	Cal-Fullerton
Gary Payton II	G	6-3	184	Oregon St.
Isaiah Taylor	G	6-1	170	Texas
Kyle Wiltjer	F	6-10	238	Gonzaga
P.J. Hairston	F	6-6	230	North Carolina
<b>Head Coach » Mark D'Antoni</b>				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
James Harden	82	38.1	.459	.359	.860	6.1	7.5	1.7	0.6	4.6	2.8	29.0
Trevor Ariza	81	35.3	.416	.371	.783	4.5	2.3	2.0	0.3	1.4	2.2	12.7
Dwight Howard	71	32.1	.620	.000	.489	11.8	1.4	1.0	1.6	2.3	3.1	13.7
Patrick Beverley	71	28.7	.434	.400	.682	3.5	3.4	1.3	0.4	1.3	3.3	9.9
Ty Lawson	53	22.2	.387	.330	.700	1.7	3.4	0.8	0.1	1.5	1.3	5.8
Terrence Jones	50	20.9	.452	.316	.664	4.2	0.8	0.5	0.8	1.0	1.7	8.7
Corey Brewer	82	20.4	.384	.272	.750	2.4	1.3	1.0	0.2	1.0	2.0	7.2
Clint Capela	77	19.1	.582	.000	.379	6.4	0.6	0.8	1.2	0.8	2.5	7.0
Marcus Thornton	47	18.8	.400	.338	.879	2.4	1.4	0.7	0.1	0.9	1.6	10.0
Josh Smith	23	18.3	.343	.271	.480	2.9	2.1	0.7	0.6	1.6	2.4	6.6
Michael Beasley	20	18.2	.522	.333	.776	4.9	0.8	0.6	0.5	1.2	2.0	12.8
Jason Terry	72	17.5	.402	.356	.818	1.1	1.4	0.7	0.1	0.7	1.3	5.9
Donatas Motiejunas	37	14.8	.439	.281	.642	2.9	1.1	0.5	0.1	1.2	1.9	6.2
Chuck Hayes	2	12.0	.500	—	1.000	4.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	3.0	2.0
Montrezl Harrell	39	9.7	.644	.000	.522	1.7	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	1.2	3.6
K.J. McDaniels	37	6.4	.403	.280	.800	1.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.8	2.4
Andrew Goudelock	8	6.3	.450	.111	.750	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.9	0.5	2.8
Sam Dekker	3	2.0	—	—	—	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
James Harden	.439	.359	.860	5.8	7.1	1.6	0.6	4.3	2.6	27.4
Trevor Ariza	.416	.371	.783	4.6	2.4	2.0	0.3	1.4	2.2	12.9
Dwight Howard	.620	.000	.489	13.2	1.5	1.1	1.8	2.6	3.5	15.4
Patrick Beverley	.434	.400	.682	4.4	4.2	1.7	0.5	1.6	4.1	12.3
Corey Brewer	.384	.272	.750	4.3	2.4	1.8	0.4	1.7	3.6	12.7
Clint Capela	.582	.000	.379	12.1	1.2	1.4	2.3	1.5	4.6	13.3
Jason Terry	.402	.356	.818	2.3	2.9	1.3	0.3	1.4	2.6	12.1
Ty Lawson	.387	.330	.700	2.7	5.5	1.3	0.2	2.5	2.2	9.5
Terrence Jones	.452	.316	.664	7.3	1.4	0.8	1.3	1.7	3.0	15.0
Marcus Thornton	.400	.338	.879	4.7	2.7	1.4	0.1	1.6	3.0	19.2
Donatas Motiejunas	.439	.281	.642	7.2	2.7	1.1	0.3	2.9	4.5	15.1
Josh Smith	.343	.271	.480	5.7	4.1	1.4	1.1	3.1	4.8	12.9
Montrezl Harrell	.644	.000	.522	6.2	1.6	1.0	1.0	1.6	4.6	13.3
Michael Beasley	.522	.333	.776	9.7	1.6	1.1	0.9	2.4	3.9	25.3
K.J. McDaniels	.403	.280	.800	6.4	1.5	1.1	0.9	2.6	4.6	13.6
Andrew Goudelock	.450	.111	.750	1.4	2.9	4.3	1.4	5.0	2.9	15.8
Chuck Hayes	.500	—	1.000	12.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	9.0	6.0
Sam Dekker	—	—	—	6.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Grizz splash the cash, now hope for health



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Expensive summer in Memphis

The front office paid point guard **MIKE CONLEY** (above) a maximum contract, and dumped a truckload of cash at the door of **CHANDLER PARSONS**. Now, they have to go out and deliver. Both are very good — but not great — players. Both have had injury issues. Paying Conley and Parsons was a big gamble for the Grizzlies, who could be stuck on the good-but-not-great wheel of playoff hierarchy. The two have something to prove.

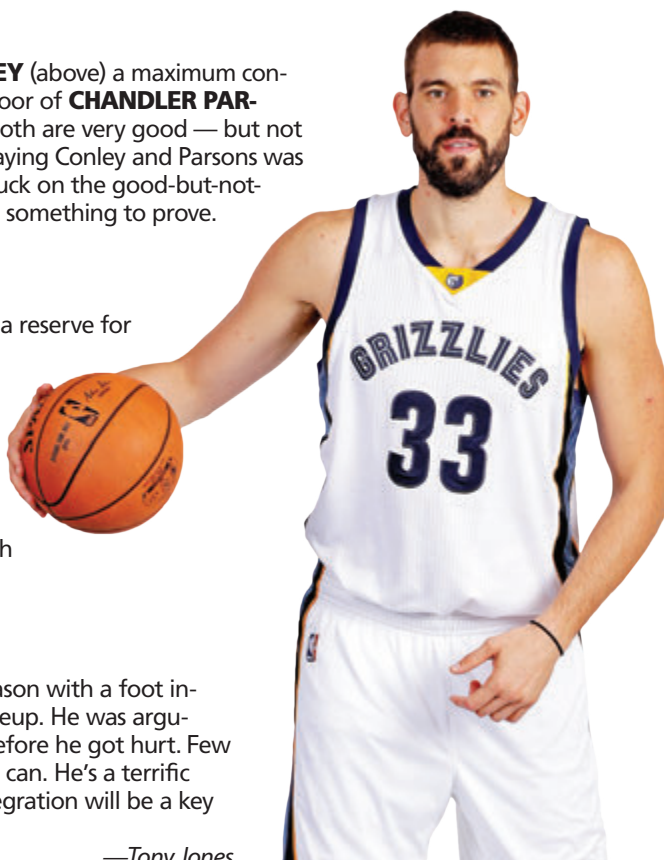
### Big man off the bench

Memphis plans on making **ZACH RANDOLPH** a reserve for the first time. Interesting, and possibly needed. Z-Bo has long been one of the best and most underrated power forwards in the NBA. But he's getting up there in age, and can no longer defend at a high level. Ultimately, it looks like a smart choice. He's still a great player in the post, and will feast on second units, which gives the Grizzlies a very nice bench option.

### Back on steady feet

**MARC GASOL** (right) missed 30 games last season with a foot injury. He's healthy and ready to return to the lineup. He was arguably the best all-around center in the league before he got hurt. Few guys at his position can affect games like Gasol can. He's a terrific scorer, shooter, passer and defender. His re-integration will be a key for Memphis, and however high their ceiling is.

—Tony Jones



### GRIZZLIES ROSTER

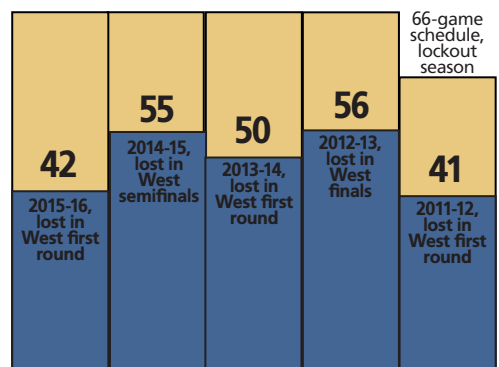
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Vince Carter	G-F	6-6	220	North Carolina
Zach Randolph	F	6-9	260	Michigan St.
Marc Gasol	C	7-1	255	Spain
Tony Allen	G-F	6-4	213	Oklahoma St.
Jordan Adams	G	6-5	209	UCLA
JaMychal Green	F	6-9	227	Alabama
Jarell Martin	F	6-10	239	LSU
Brandan Wright	F	6-10	210	North Carolina
Chandler Parsons	F	6-9	227	Florida
Andrew Harrison	G	6-6	210	Kentucky
Mike Conley	G	6-1	175	Ohio St.
Troy Daniels	G	6-4	205	VCU
James Ennis	F	6-7	210	Long Beach St.
Wade Baldwin	G	6-3	194	Vanderbilt
Deyonta Davis	F	6-10	240	Michigan St.
D.J. Stephens	G-F	6-5	190	Memphis
Wayne Selden	G	6-5	230	Kansas
Troy Williams	F	6-7	210	Indiana
Tony Wroten	G	6-6	205	Washington
<b>Head Coach » David Fizdale</b>				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Marc Gasol	52	34.4	.464	.667	.829	7.0	3.8	1.0	1.3	2.3	2.7	16.6
Zach Randolph	68	29.6	.475	.231	.796	7.8	2.1	0.6	0.2	1.5	2.1	15.3
Mike Conley	56	31.4	.422	.363	.834	2.9	6.1	1.2	0.3	1.5	1.8	15.3
Lance Stephenson	26	26.6	.474	.355	.815	4.4	2.8	0.7	0.2	1.8	2.2	14.2
Jeff Green	53	29.1	.431	.309	.800	4.5	1.8	0.8	0.4	1.3	1.9	12.2
Mario Chalmers	55	22.8	.417	.326	.827	2.6	3.8	1.5	0.2	1.8	3.0	10.8
Matt Barnes	76	28.8	.381	.322	.804	5.5	2.1	1.0	0.8	1.6	3.1	10.0
Courtney Lee	51	29.2	.458	.370	.826	2.3	1.5	1.0	0.3	1.0	1.5	10.0
Tony Allen	64	25.3	.458	.357	.652	4.6	1.1	1.7	0.3	1.2	2.7	8.4
JaMychal Green	78	18.5	.465	.333	.752	4.8	0.9	0.6	0.4	1.1	2.4	7.4
P.J. Hairston	18	20.8	.348	.232	.727	2.6	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.9	1.7	6.9
Vince Carter	60	16.8	.388	.349	.833	2.4	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.6	1.7	6.6
Jarell Martin	27	14.1	.466	.000	.726	3.2	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.7	2.1	5.7
Xavier Munford	14	17.4	.416	.391	.500	2.2	1.6	0.9	0.2	1.1	1.8	5.7
Chris Andersen	20	18.3	.548	.222	.688	4.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.4	1.3	4.6
Ryan Hollins	32	12.9	.625	—	.619	2.7	0.3	0.2	0.6	0.7	1.8	3.6
Russ Smith	15	4.4	.318	.200	.615	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.3	1.5

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Marc Gasol	.464	.667	.829	7.3	3.9	1.0	1.4	2.4	2.8	17.3
Zach Randolph	.475	.231	.796	9.4	2.5	0.8	0.2	1.9	2.6	18.6
Mike Conley	.422	.363	.834	3.4	7.0	1.4	0.3	1.7	2.0	17.5
Lance Stephenson	.474	.355	.815	6.0	3.8	1.0	0.3	2.4	2.9	19.2
Jeff Green	.431	.309	.800	5.6	2.3	0.9	0.4	1.6	2.4	15.1
Mario Chalmers	.417	.326	.827	4.1	6.1	2.3	0.3	2.9	4.7	17.1
Matt Barnes	.381	.322	.804	6.9	2.7	1.3	0.9	2.0	3.8	12.5
Courtney Lee	.458	.370	.826	2.9	1.8	1.3	0.4	1.2	1.9	12.4
Tony Allen	.458	.357	.652	6.6	1.6	2.4	0.4	1.7	3.9	11.9
JaMychal Green	.465	.333	.752	9.3	1.7	1.1	0.8	2.1	4.7	14.4
P.J. Hairston	.348	.232	.727	4.4	0.9	0.8	0.4	1.6	3.0	11.9
Vince Carter	.388	.349	.833	5.2	2.0	1.4	0.6	1.3	3.6	14.1
Jarell Martin	.466	.000	.726	8.1	1.4	0.8	0.7	1.8	5.5	14.5
Xavier Munford	.416	.391	.500	4.6	3.2	1.9	0.4	2.2	3.7	11.8
Chris Andersen	.548	.222	.688	8.8	0.9	1.4	1.0	0.7	2.5	9.0
Ryan Hollins	.625	—	.619	7.6	0.9	0.5	1.7	1.8	5.1	10.1
Russ Smith	.318	.200	.615	4.9	6.0	2.7	0.5	3.8	2.7	12.5

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



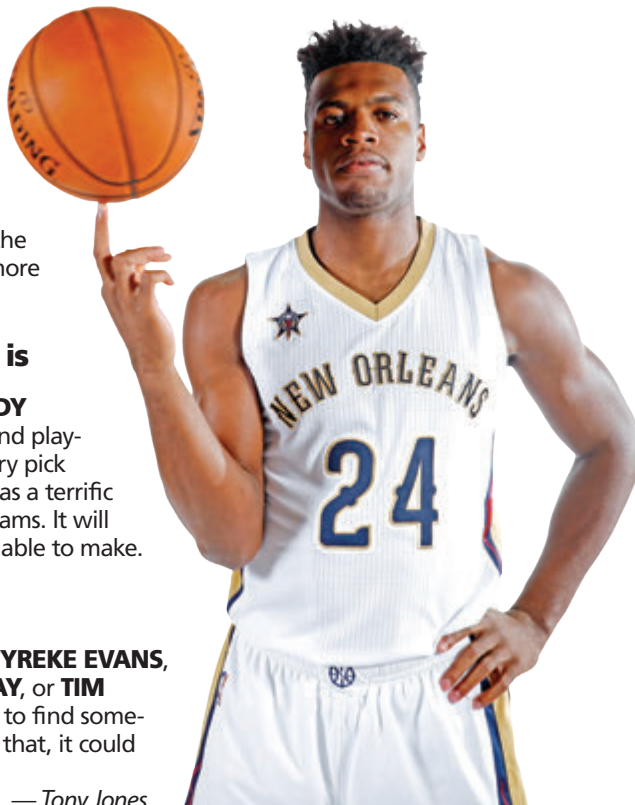
## Davis at center of everything Pelicans will do



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Can Anthony Davis carry the load?

We all know how great **ANTHONY DAVIS** (above) is. Individually, he's a transcendent talent, capable of changing games from the power forward spot. But he can't stay healthy, and he's got to start winning big at some point. Davis hasn't been surrounded by the best core, and he will start the season without point guard **JRUE HOLIDAY**, who left the team indefinitely to be with his wife, who has a medical issue. But Davis is a top-five overall talent in the NBA. That talent has to start equaling victories and more playoff appearances.



### Shooters shoot, and that's what Hield is

Word out of Pelicans camp is that rookie guard **BUDDY HIELD** (right) has been fantastic. He's making shots and playing well defensively. He's looked well worth the lottery pick New Orleans spent on him in June. Hield could serve as a terrific floor-spacer for Davis, who routinely draws double-teams. It will be interesting to see how much of an impact Hield is able to make.

### Who's the point guard?

With Holiday gone indefinitely, the job could fall to **TYREKE EVANS**, once he's healthy. It could be **LANGSTON GALLOWAY**, or **TIM FRAZIER**, or even **LANCE STEPHENSON**. They have to find someone capable of filling the gap. If New Orleans can do that, it could be better than people think.

— Tony Jones

### PELICANS ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Quincy Pondexter	G	6-7	220	Washington
Anthony Davis	F	6-10	253	Kentucky
Jrue Holiday	G	6-4	205	UCLA
Tyreke Evans	G	6-6	220	Memphis
Alexis Ajinca	C	7-2	248	France
Omer Asik	C	7-0	255	Turkey
Dante Cunningham	F	6-8	230	Villanova
E'Twaun Moore	G	6-4	191	Purdue
Langston Galloway	G	6-2	200	St. Joseph's
Buddy Hield	G	6-4	214	Oklahoma
Tim Frazier	G	6-1	170	Penn State
Alonzo Gee	G	6-6	225	Alabama
Terrence Jones	F	6-9	252	Kentucky
Cheick Diallo	F	6-9	220	Kansas
Solomon Hill	F	6-7	225	Arizona
Robert Sacre	C	7-0	270	Gonzaga
Shawn Dawson	F	6-6	195	Israel
Lance Stephenson	F	6-5	230	Cincinnati
Quinn Cook	G	6-2	184	Duke
<b>Head Coach</b> » Alvin Gentry				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Anthony Davis	61	35.5	.493	.324	.758	10.3	1.9	1.3	2.0	2.0	2.4	24.3
Ryan Anderson	66	30.4	.427	.366	.873	6.0	1.1	0.6	0.4	1.4	1.7	17.0
Jrue Holiday	25	28.2	.439	.336	.843	3.0	6.0	1.4	0.3	2.6	2.3	16.8
James Ennis	9	31.3	.500	.480	.792	3.9	2.0	1.3	0.3	1.9	2.9	15.9
Eric Gordon	45	32.9	.418	.384	.888	2.2	2.7	1.0	0.3	1.6	2.2	15.2
Tyreke Evans	25	30.6	.433	.388	.796	5.2	6.6	1.3	0.3	2.9	2.6	15.2
Tim Frazier	16	29.3	.450	.419	.763	4.4	7.5	1.4	0.1	2.4	2.6	13.1
Jordan Hamilton	11	27.6	.422	.289	.667	5.6	2.3	0.7	0.3	1.5	2.2	11.4
Norris Cole	45	26.6	.405	.324	.800	3.4	3.7	0.8	0.1	1.7	2.3	10.6
Ish Smith	27	22.9	.430	.303	.767	3.4	5.7	0.9	0.2	1.7	1.4	8.9
Toney Douglas	61	20.7	.411	.399	.848	2.3	2.6	1.1	0.1	1.0	2.1	8.7
Luke Babbitt	47	18.0	.422	.404	.780	3.1	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.5	1.9	7.0
Dante Cunningham	80	24.6	.451	.316	.695	3.0	1.0	0.5	0.4	0.5	2.2	6.1
Alexis Ajinca	59	14.6	.476	.000	.839	4.6	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.9	2.3	6.0
Bryce Dejean-Jones	14	19.9	.406	.375	.524	3.4	1.1	0.7	0.1	0.8	1.2	5.6
Alonzo Gee	73	22.4	.518	.283	.667	3.4	1.0	0.9	0.2	0.8	2.3	4.5
Omer Asik	68	17.3	.533	—	.545	6.1	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.9	1.8	4.0
Kendrick Perkins	37	14.6	.533	—	.440	3.5	0.8	0.3	0.3	1.1	1.7	2.5
Orlando Johnson	5	10.8	.235	.200	.500	1.2	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.6	0.8	0.0
Jimmer Fredette	4	3.3	.250	.000	—	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.5
Nate Robinson	2	11.5	.000	.000	—	0.0	2.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0
<b>Per 36 Minutes</b>												
Anthony Davis		.493	.324	.758	10.4	1.9	1.3	2.1	2.0	2.5	24.6	
Ryan Anderson		.427	.366	.873	7.1	1.3	0.7	0.4	1.6	2.0	20.2	
Jrue Holiday		.439	.336	.843	3.8	7.7	1.7	0.4	3.3	2.9	21.4	
James Ennis		.500	.480	.792	4.5	2.3	1.5	0.4	2.2	3.3	18.3	
Eric Gordon		.418	.384	.888	2.4	2.9	1.0	0.3	1.8	2.4	16.7	
Tyreke Evans		.433	.388	.796	6.1	7.7	1.5	0.4	3.4	3.1	17.8	
Tim Frazier		.450	.419	.763	5.4	9.2	1.8	0.1	2.9	3.2	16.1	
Jordan Hamilton		.422	.289	.667	7.3	3.0	0.9	0.4	2.0	2.8	14.8	
Norris Cole		.405	.324	.800	4.5	5.0	1.1	0.2	2.3	3.1	14.3	
Ish Smith		.430	.303	.767	5.4	9.0	1.4	0.4	2.6	2.2	13.9	
Toney Douglas		.411	.399	.848	4.1	4.5	2.0	0.1	1.8	3.7	15.1	
Luke Babbitt		.422	.404	.780	6.3	2.3	0.5	0.3	1.0	3.8	13.9	
Dante Cunningham		.451	.316	.695	4.3	1.4	0.8	0.6	0.7	3.2	8.8	
Alexis Ajinca		.476	.000	.839	11.2	1.3	0.8	1.5	2.3	5.6	14.7	
Bryce Dejean-Jones		.406	.375	.524	6.2	1.9	1.3	0.3	1.4	2.2	10.2	
Alonzo Gee		.518	.283	.667	5.4	1.6	1.4	0.3	1.2	3.7	7.2	
Omer Asik		.533	—	.545	12.7	0.8	0.6	0.7	1.8	3.8	8.2	
Kendrick Perkins		.533	—	.440	8.5	2.1	0.7	0.7	2.7	4.3	6.0	
Orlando Johnson		.235	.200	.500	4.0	1.3	0.7	0.0	2.0	2.7	6.7	
Jimmer Fredette		.250	.000	—	0.0	2.8	2.8	0.0	2.8	2.8	5.5	
Nate Robinson		.000	.000	—	0.0	6.3	1.6	0.0	0.0	7.8	0.0	

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS

Year	Victories	Notes
2015-16	30	
2014-15	45	lost in West first round
2013-14	34	
2012-13	27	
2011-12	21	66-game schedule, lockout season

## Out with the old, in with the new Spurs stars



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### It's Leonard's team now

**KAWHI LEONARD** (right) is the number one option. Tim Duncan is retired. **TONY PARKER** and **MANU GINOBILI** are on their last legs. **LAMARCUS ALDRIDGE** (top), while good, isn't as good as Leonard. So Leonard has to take the mantle and carry the Spurs into a new era. Leonard is one of the best two-way players in the league, a harassing defender who's smooth and deliberate offensively. If the Spurs are going to maintain their standing in the West, Leonard is going to have to be the guy leading the charge.

### A stopgap replacement for Duncan

San Antonio bounced back from Duncan's retirement by adding **PAU GASOL**, the excellent veteran big man. Gasol fits so well with the Spurs thanks to his passing ability, the rim protection, the perimeter shooting and ability to post up. Duncan is a huge loss. Even as a greybeard, he was an elite defender, even as his offense fell off. But Gasol will step in and be an able substitute

### More talent in the San Antonio pipeline

The Spurs got a steal in **DEJOUNTE MURRAY**, the 6-foot-5 point guard out of Washington. His stock fell on draft night because of character concerns. But make no mistake, this guy is a talent, and San Antonio is one of the best places he could've landed. Murray may take a few years to develop. But if he figures out a way to contribute this season, watch out.



—Tony Jones

### SPURS ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Tony Parker	G	6-2	185	France
Patty Mills	G	6-0	185	Saint Mary's
Kyle Anderson	F	6-9	230	UCLA
Kawhi Leonard	F	6-7	230	San Diego St.
Danny Green	G	6-6	215	North Carolina
LaMarcus Aldridge	F	6-11	240	Texas
Jonathon Simmons	G	6-6	195	Houston
Pau Gasol	C	7-0	250	Spain
Manu Ginobili	G	6-6	205	Argentina
Dewayne Dedmon	C	7-0	245	USC
Dejounte Murray	G	6-5	170	Washington
Bryn Forbes	G	6-3	190	Michigan St.
Ryan Arcidiacono	G	6-3	195	Villanova
Davis Bertans	F	6-10	210	Latvia
Livio Jean-Charles	F	6-9	217	French Guinea
Patricio Garino	G	6-6	210	George Washington
David Lee	F	6-9	245	Florida
Joel Anthony	C	6-9	245	UNLV
Nicolas Laprovittola	G	6-4	180	Argentina
<b>Head Coach »</b> Gregg Popovich				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Player	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Kawhi Leonard	72	33.1	.506	.443	.874	6.8	2.6	1.8	1.0	1.5	1.8	21.2
LaMarcus Aldridge	74	30.6	.513	.000	.858	8.5	1.5	0.5	1.1	1.3	2.0	18.0
Tony Parker	72	27.5	.493	.415	.760	2.4	5.3	0.8	0.2	1.8	1.6	11.9
Danny Green	79	26.1	.376	.332	.739	3.8	1.8	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.8	7.2
Tim Duncan	61	25.2	.488	.000	.702	7.3	2.7	0.8	1.3	1.5	2.0	8.6
Patrick Mills	81	20.5	.425	.384	.810	2.0	2.8	0.7	0.1	0.9	1.3	8.5
Manu Ginobili	58	19.6	.453	.391	.813	2.5	3.1	1.1	0.2	1.7	1.7	9.6
Boris Diaw	76	18.2	.527	.362	.737	3.1	2.3	0.3	0.3	1.3	1.3	6.4
David West	78	18.0	.545	.429	.788	4.0	1.8	0.6	0.7	0.9	1.8	7.1
Kevin Martin	16	16.3	.353	.333	.933	1.8	0.8	0.6	0.1	0.8	0.9	6.2
Kyle Anderson	78	16.0	.468	.324	.747	3.1	1.6	0.8	0.4	0.8	1.2	4.5
Jonathon Simmons	55	14.8	.504	.383	.750	1.7	1.1	0.4	0.1	1.0	1.9	6.0
Andre Miller	13	13.9	.479	.250	.692	2.1	2.2	0.5	0.0	0.9	1.1	4.3
Boban Marjanovic	54	9.4	.603	—	.763	3.6	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.5	1.0	5.5
Rasual Butler	46	9.4	.471	.306	.688	1.2	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.2	2.7
Ray McCallum	31	8.3	.403	.313	.900	1.0	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.5	2.2
Matt Bonner	30	6.9	.509	.441	.750	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.5	2.5

Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Kawhi Leonard	.506	.443	.874	7.5	2.8	1.9	1.1	1.6	2.0	23.0
LaMarcus Aldridge	.513	.000	.858	10.1	1.8	0.6	1.3	1.6	2.4	21.2
Danny Green	.376	.332	.739	5.3	2.5	1.4	1.1	1.3	2.5	10.0
Tony Parker	.493	.415	.760	3.2	6.9	1.0	0.2	2.4	2.1	15.6
Patrick Mills	.425	.384	.810	3.4	4.9	1.3	0.1	1.6	2.2	14.9
Tim Duncan	.488	.000	.702	10.5	3.8	1.1	1.8	2.1	2.9	12.2
David West	.545	.429	.788	7.9	3.7	1.1	1.4	1.7	3.6	14.2
Boris Diaw	.527	.362	.737	6.1	4.6	0.7	0.5	2.5	2.6	12.6
Kyle Anderson	.468	.324	.747	7.1	3.6	1.7	0.8	1.7	2.8	10.1
Manu Ginobili	.453	.391	.813	4.6	5.6	2.1	0.3	3.1	3.1	17.6
Jonathon Simmons	.504	.383	.750	4.3	2.6	1.1	0.2	2.3	4.6	14.7
Boban Marjanovic	.603	—	.763	13.7	1.5	0.9	1.6	2.1	3.8	21.0
Rasual Butler	.471	.306	.688	4.7	2.0	1.1	1.9	0.7	0.9	10.3
Kevin Martin	.353	.333	.933	4.0	1.7	1.2	0.3	1.8	2.1	13.7
Ray McCallum	.403	.313	.900	4.4	4.6	0.7	0.6	1.5	2.0	9.6
Matt Bonner	.509	.441	.750	4.7	1.6	1.0	0.2	0.5	2.8	13.3
Andre Miller	.479	.250	.692	5.4	5.8	1.4	0.0	2.4	2.8	11.1

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS

67	55	62	58	66-game schedule, lockout season
2015-16, lost in West semis	2014-15, lost in West first round	2013-14, won NBA title	2012-13, lost in NBA finals	2011-12, lost in West finals

## And the young shall lead the Nuggets forward



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Questions that demand answers

This team has terrific young talent in **EMMANUEL MUDIAY** (top), **JAMAL MURRAY**, **GARY HARRIS**, **WILL BARTON**, **NIKOLA JOKIC** (right) and **JUSUF NURKIC**. This front office has drafted well, traded well, and has put together a deep, intriguing roster for **MIKE MALONE** to work with. Now, they have to find room for all of these guys to play. We know Mudiay will run the point. Beyond that there are questions. Are Murray and Harris compatible? Can Barton — a natural shooting guard — play the bulk of his minutes at small forward? Can Jokic and Nurkic play together up front? There are a bevy of questions that need answers.

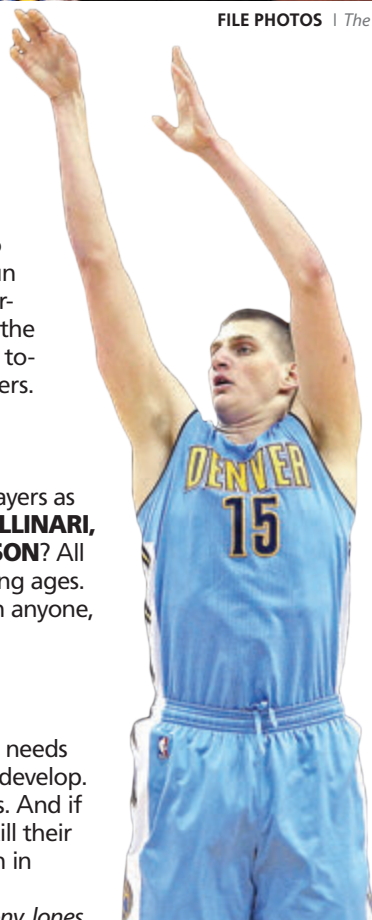
### Where will the veterans fit in?

As deep as the youngsters are, this team has a lot of veteran players as well. What is Denver going to do with the likes of **DANILO GALLINARI**, **KENNETH FARIED**, **WILSON CHANDLER**, and **JAMEER NELSON**? All of these guys are rotation players, even in their various advancing ages. And not many fit with the young guys on the roster. More than anyone, Denver could be a team that makes moves during the season.

### Plenty of paths for the franchise to take

What direction the franchise is going in is what the front office needs to figure out. All of the young talent on hand needs to play to develop. They can't do that with the veterans taking up rotation minutes. And if the front office wants to trade some of the older players, you kill their trade value by sitting them down. The season within the season in Denver will be interesting to watch.

— Tony Jones



### NUGGETS ROSTER

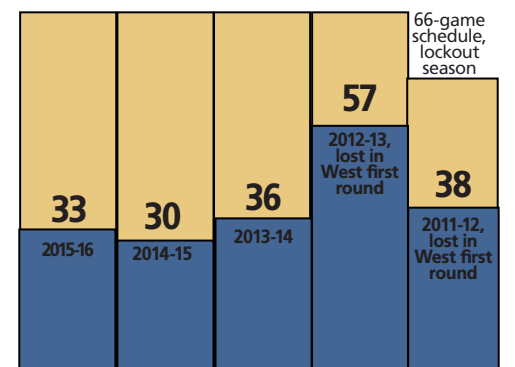
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Danilo Gallinari	F	6-10	225	Italy
Wilson Chandler	F	6-8	225	DePaul
Kenneth Faried	F	6-8	228	Morehead St.
Gary Harris	G	6-4	210	Michigan St.
Jusuf Nurkic	C	7-0	280	Bosnia
Emmanuel Mudiay	G	6-5	200	Congo
Jameer Nelson	G	6-0	190	St. Joseph's
Nikola Jokic	C	6-10	250	Croatia
Will Barton	G	6-6	175	Memphis
JaKarr Sampson	F	6-9	214	St. John's
Axel Toupane	F	6-7	197	France
Darrell Arthur	F	6-9	235	Kansas
Malik Beasley	G	6-5	196	Florida St.
Mike Miller	G	6-8	218	Florida
Jamal Murray	G	6-4	207	Kentucky
Juan Hernangomez	F	6-9	230	Spain
D.J. Kennedy	F	6-6	215	St. John's
Robbie Hummel	F	6-8	215	Purdue
Nate Wolters	G	6-4	190	S. Dakota St.
Jarnell Stokes	F	6-9	263	Tennessee
<b>Head Coach » Michael Malone</b>				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Player	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Danilo Gallinari	53	34.7	.410	.364	.868	5.3	2.5	0.8	0.4	1.5	1.6	19.5
Will Barton	82	28.7	.432	.345	.806	5.8	2.5	0.9	0.5	1.7	1.8	14.4
Emmanuel Mudiay	68	30.4	.364	.319	.670	3.4	5.5	1.0	0.5	3.2	2.1	12.8
Kenneth Faried	67	25.3	.558	.500	.613	8.7	1.2	0.5	0.9	1.4	2.5	12.5
Gary Harris	76	32.1	.469	.354	.820	2.9	1.9	1.3	0.2	1.3	1.9	12.3
D.J. Augustin	28	23.5	.445	.411	.819	1.9	4.7	0.9	0.1	1.9	1.6	11.6
Nikola Jokic	80	21.7	.512	.333	.811	7.0	2.4	1.0	0.6	1.3	2.6	10.0
Jusuf Nurkic	32	17.1	.417	.000	.616	5.5	1.3	0.8	1.4	1.7	2.8	8.2
Joffrey Lauvergne	59	17.6	.513	.245	.899	4.9	0.9	0.2	0.3	0.9	1.9	7.9
Jameer Nelson	39	26.6	.368	.299	.857	2.9	4.9	0.6	0.1	1.7	2.6	7.7
Darrell Arthur	70	21.7	.452	.385	.755	4.2	1.4	0.8	0.7	0.9	2.6	7.5
J.J. Hickson	20	15.3	.505	—	.458	4.4	0.8	0.5	0.4	1.8	1.1	6.9
Randy Foye	54	19.8	.351	.296	.830	1.9	2.1	0.5	0.3	1.1	1.5	6.0
JaKarr Sampson	26	18.0	.470	.276	.720	2.3	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.7	2.0	5.2
Axel Toupane	21	14.5	.357	.325	.765	1.5	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.9	3.6
Sean Kilpatrick	8	10.3	.381	.235	.875	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.9	3.4
Kostas Papanikolaou	26	11.3	.364	.313	.643	1.5	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.8	0.9	2.6
Mike Miller	47	7.9	.355	.365	—	1.1	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.4	1.1	1.3
Erick Green	3	2.3	.000	.000	—	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Danilo Gallinari	.410	.364	.868	5.5	2.6	0.8	0.4	1.5	1.7	20.3
Will Barton	.432	.345	.806	7.3	3.1	1.1	0.6	2.1	2.2	18.0
Emmanuel Mudiay	.364	.319	.670	4.0	6.5	1.1	0.6	3.8	2.5	15.2
Kenneth Faried	.558	.500	.613	12.3	1.7	0.7	1.3	1.9	3.6	17.7
Gary Harris	.469	.354	.820	3.2	2.2	1.4	0.3	1.4	2.1	16.2
D.J. Augustin	.445	.411	.819	2.8	7.2	1.4	0.1	2.9	2.4	17.8
Nikola Jokic	.512	.333	.811	11.6	3.9	1.6	1.0	2.2	4.3	16.5
Jusuf Nurkic	.417	.000	.616	11.5	2.6	1.6	2.9	3.6	6.0	17.3
Joffrey Lauvergne	.513	.245	.899	10.0	1.9	0.4	0.5	1.9	4.0	16.1
Jameer Nelson	.368	.299	.857	4.0	6.6	0.9	0.2	2.3	3.5	10.4
Darrell Arthur	.452	.385	.755	7.0	2.3	1.3	1.1	1.6	4.4	12.5
J.J. Hickson	.505	—	.458	10.3	1.9	1.2	1.4	1.9	4.1	16.2
Randy Foye	.351	.296	.830	3.5	3.8	0.9	0.5	2.0	2.8	10.9
JaKarr Sampson	.470	.276	.720	4.7	1.2	0.9	1.3	1.5	3.9	10.3
Axel Toupane	.357	.325	.765	3.7	1.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	4.7	9.0
Sean Kilpatrick	.381	.235	.875	2.6	1.3	0.9	0.0	1.8	3.1	11.9
Kostas Papanikolaou	.364	.313	.643	4.9	2.0	1.6	0.6	2.6	2.9	8.2
Mike Miller	.355	.365	—	5.1	3.9	1.3	0.4	1.6	5.1	6.1
Erick Green	.000	.000	—	5.1	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## One young talent stands above the others



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Franchise-changing player

That's about the only way to describe **KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS** (top), who may be the best young player in the NBA heading into his second season. Towns was far and away the best rookie in the league last year, is on any short list when it comes to picking the best center in the NBA, and will only get better. Remember how we all felt when Tim Duncan and Anthony Davis came into the league? Towns gives you that same feeling.

### The Thibodeau effect

**TOM THIBODEAU** is one of the better coaches in the league. He's not without warts, but he brings instant credibility to a young roster looking to challenge for a playoff spot. He will get the young guys to buy in defensively. He may be close to the perfect coach for these Timberwolves, and he was a massive get for Minnesota given the other options a top coach would have available in the past summer.

### The Wiggins conundrum

How good is **ANDREW WIGGINS** (right)? He's so talented. But with Towns, we all knew right away how special he was. With Wiggins? He still has proving to do. He can score, but he's inefficient at it. He should be a better defender, and doesn't fill up the box score the way someone with his talent and athleticism should. Ultimately, Wiggins may end up as a number two option, which is OK, because the team has Towns. But Wiggins still needs to improve to reach his ceiling, which is extremely high.

— Tony Jones



### TIMBERWOLVES ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Ricky Rubio	G	6-4	194	Spain
Shabazz Muhammad	G	6-6	223	UCLA
Gorgui Dieng	C	6-11	241	Louisville
Nikola Pekovic	C	6-11	307	Montenegro
Andrew Wiggins	F	6-8	199	Kansas
Zach LaVine	G	6-5	189	UCLA
Adreian Payne	F	6-10	237	Michigan St.
Karl-Anthony Towns	C	7-0	244	Kentucky
Tyus Jones	G	6-2	195	Duke
Nemanja Bjelica	F	6-10	240	Serbia
Cole Aldrich	C	6-11	250	Kansas
Kris Dunn	G	6-4	210	Providence
Brandon Rush	G-F	6-6	210	Kansas
Jordan Hill	C-F	6-10	235	Arizona
Toure' Murry	G-F	6-5	195	Wichita St.
John Lucas III	G	5-11	165	Oklahoma St.
Rasual Butler	G-F	6-7	215	LaSalle

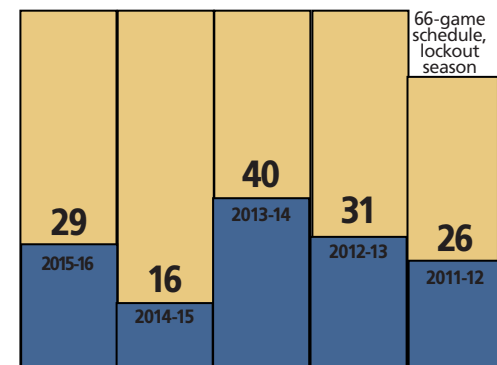
**Head Coach »** Tom Thibodeau

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Player	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Andrew Wiggins	81	35.1	.459	.300	.761	3.6	2.0	1.0	0.6	2.2	2.0	20.7
Karl-Anthony Towns	82	32.0	.542	.341	.811	10.5	2.0	0.7	1.7	2.2	3.0	18.3
Zach LaVine	82	28.0	.452	.389	.793	2.8	3.1	0.8	0.2	1.9	2.4	14.0
Kevin Martin	39	21.4	.377	.369	.880	2.1	1.2	0.4	0.0	1.1	1.7	10.6
Shabazz Muhammad	82	20.5	.465	.289	.764	3.3	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.9	1.1	10.5
Ricky Rubio	76	30.6	.374	.326	.847	4.3	8.7	2.1	0.1	2.5	2.6	10.1
Gorgui Dieng	82	27.1	.532	.300	.827	7.1	1.7	1.1	1.2	1.7	2.7	10.1
Nemanja Bjelica	60	17.9	.468	.384	.727	3.5	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.8	2.6	5.1
Nikola Pekovic	12	13.0	.380	—	.800	1.8	0.9	0.1	0.0	0.8	1.8	4.5
Tyus Jones	37	15.5	.359	.302	.718	1.3	2.9	0.8	0.1	0.9	0.9	4.2
Andre Miller	26	10.8	.621	.250	.789	0.9	2.2	0.3	0.0	1.0	1.2	3.4
Kevin Garnett	38	14.6	.470	.000	.667	3.9	1.6	0.7	0.3	0.4	1.8	3.2
Tayshaun Prince	77	19.0	.445	.174	.684	1.9	0.9	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.8	2.9
Adreian Payne	52	9.3	.366	.281	.654	2.1	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.7	1.5	2.5
Greg Smith	18	10.7	.563	—	.412	2.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.4	1.6	2.4
Damjan Rudez	33	8.4	.403	.340	1.000	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.4	1.0	2.3

Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Andrew Wiggins	.459	.300	.761	3.7	2.1	1.0	0.6	2.3	2.1	21.2
Karl-Anthony Towns	.542	.341	.811	11.7	2.2	0.8	1.9	2.5	3.4	20.6
Zach LaVine	.452	.389	.793	3.6	3.9	1.1	0.3	2.4	3.0	18.0
Kevin Martin	.377	.369	.880	3.5	2.0	0.7	0.0	1.8	2.9	17.9
Shabazz Muhammad	.465	.289	.764	5.7	1.1	0.5	0.1	1.5	2.0	18.5
Ricky Rubio	.374	.326	.847	5.1	10.2	2.5	0.2	3.0	3.1	11.9
Gorgui Dieng	.532	.300	.827	9.5	2.3	1.5	1.6	2.3	3.6	13.4
Nemanja Bjelica	.468	.384	.727	7.0	2.8	0.9	0.7	1.6	5.2	10.3
Nikola Pekovic	.380	—	.800	4.8	2.5	0.2	0.0	2.1	5.1	12.5
Tyus Jones	.359	.302	.718	3.0	6.8	1.9	0.2	2.1	2.1	9.8
Andre Miller	.621	.250	.789	3.1	7.5	1.2	0.0	3.2	4.1	11.3
Kevin Garnett	.470	.000	.667	9.7	4.0	1.8	0.6	1.0	4.5	7.9
Tayshaun Prince	.445	.174	.684	3.6	1.8	0.9	0.3	0.7	1.5	5.4
Adreian Payne	.366	.281	.654	8.2	2.1	1.2	0.8	2.7	5.7	9.8
Greg Smith	.563	—	.412	7.9	1.1	0.7	0.2	1.3	5.2	8.1
Damjan Rudez	.403	.340	1.000	2.6	1.4	0.4	0.1	1.7	4.3	9.7

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS





## Thunder have a Durant-sized hole to fill in



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Oscar Robertson redux?

Last season, **RUSSELL WESTBROOK** (top) was simply sensational, turning in a career year with averages of 23.5 points, 10.4 assists and 7.8 rebounds per night. Oscar Robertson is the only player in NBA history to average a triple-double. Can Westbrook be the second? He is going to play so many minutes this season, and have the ball in his hands so much, that if anyone is going to challenge that piece of history, he'd be the guy. Expect another career effort from one of the best point guards in the league.

### Multiple options at small forward

Without Kevin Durant, who fills his starting spot? There are several options, not all of them appealing. **ANDRE ROBERSON** is rounding into one of the best perimeter defenders in the league, but he can't score. **KYLE SINGLER** isn't an NBA-level starter, and **JOSH HUESTIS** is very young. The Thunder could throw **ERSAN ILYASOVA** in for his shooting, but he'd be defensively challenged. Roberson is probably the best choice, but his presence could affect spacing.

### New faces fitting in

If **VICTOR OLADIPO** (right) can mesh with Westbrook, the Thunder have one of the best and most athletic backcourts in the league. They won't win a 3-point shooting contest. But those two can put stress on defenses with their ability to get to the basket. Getting used to each other will be an initial issue. But their talent can carry OKC to the postseason.

— Tony Jones



### THUNDER ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Ersan Ilyasova	F	6-10	235	Turkey
Andre Roberson	G	6-7	210	Colorado
Russell Westbrook	G	6-3	200	UCLA
Nick Collison	F	6-10	255	Kansas
Steven Adams	C	7-0	255	Pittsburgh
Victor Oladipo	G	6-4	210	Indiana
Anthony Morrow	G	6-5	210	Georgia Tech
Mitch McGary	F	6-10	255	Michigan
Joffrey Lauvergne	F	6-11	220	France
Cameron Payne	G	6-3	185	Murray St.
Kyle Singler	F	6-8	228	Duke
Enes Kanter	C	6-11	245	Turkey
Josh Huestis	F	6-7	230	Stanford
Alex Abrines	G	6-6	190	Spain
Domantas Sabonis	F	6-11	240	Gonzaga
Ronnie Price	G	6-2	190	Utah Valley
Semaj Christon	G	6-3	190	Xavier
Alex Caruso	G	6-5	184	Texas A&M
Kaleb Tarczewski	C	7-0	243	Arizona
Chris Wright	F	6-8	226	Dayton

**Head Coach** » Billy Donovan

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Player	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Kevin Durant	72	35.8	.505	.387	.898	8.2	5.0	1.0	1.2	3.5	1.9	28.2
Russell Westbrook	80	34.4	.454	.296	.812	7.8	10.4	2.0	0.3	4.3	2.5	23.5
Enes Kanter	82	21.0	.576	.476	.797	8.1	0.4	0.3	0.4	1.4	2.0	12.7
Serge Ibaka	78	32.1	.479	.326	.752	6.8	0.8	0.5	1.9	1.4	2.7	12.6
Dion Waiters	78	27.6	.399	.358	.713	2.6	2.0	1.0	0.2	1.5	1.8	9.8
Steven Adams	80	25.2	.613	—	.582	6.7	0.8	0.5	1.1	1.1	2.8	8.0
Randy Foye	27	21.2	.349	.309	.815	1.9	1.8	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.8	5.6
Anthony Morrow	68	13.6	.408	.387	.744	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.9	5.6
Cameron Payne	57	12.2	.410	.324	.792	1.5	1.9	0.6	0.1	0.8	1.4	5.0
Andre Roberson	70	22.2	.496	.311	.611	3.6	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.5	1.9	4.8
D.J. Augustin	34	15.3	.380	.393	.765	1.3	1.9	0.4	0.1	0.9	1.2	4.2
Kyle Singler	68	14.4	.389	.309	.659	2.1	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.5	1.8	3.4
Josh Huestis	5	11.0	.417	.667	.000	2.0	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.6	2.8
Steve Novak	7	3.4	.500	.556	—	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	2.4
Nick Collison	59	11.8	.459	.000	.697	2.9	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.8	1.8	2.1
Nazr Mohammed	5	3.8	.600	—	1.000	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.8	1.6
Mitch McGary	20	3.6	.478	.000	.400	0.9	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.5	1.3

Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Kevin Durant	.505	.387	.898	8.2	5.0	1.0	1.2	3.5	1.9	28.3
Russell Westbrook	.454	.296	.812	8.2	10.9	2.1	0.3	4.5	2.6	24.6
Enes Kanter	.576	.476	.797	13.9	0.7	0.5	0.7	2.4	3.5	21.7
Serge Ibaka	.479	.326	.752	7.7	1.0	0.5	2.1	1.6	3.0	14.2
Dion Waiters	.399	.358	.713	3.4	2.6	1.4	0.3	2.0	2.4	12.7
Steven Adams	.613	—	.582	9.5	1.1	0.8	1.6	1.5	4.0	11.4
Randy Foye	.349	.309	.815	3.2	3.1	0.8	0.8	1.8	3.0	9.5
Anthony Morrow	.408	.387	.744	2.4	0.9	0.9	0.2	0.7	2.5	14.8
Cameron Payne	.410	.324	.792	4.4	5.6	1.9	0.3	2.3	4.1	14.6
Andre Roberson	.496	.311	.611	5.8	1.1	1.2	1.0	0.8	3.1	7.8
D.J. Augustin	.380	.393	.765	3.0	4.6	0.9	0.1	2.1	2.8	9.8
Kyle Singler	.389	.309	.659	5.2	0.9	1.1	0.3	1.2	4.4	8.5
Josh Huestis	.417	.667	.000	6.5	0.0	0.7	1.3	2.0	2.0	9.2
Steve Novak	.500	.556	—	6.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.5	25.5
Nick Collison	.459	.000	.697	8.8	2.7	0.8	0.8	2.6	5.5	6.3
Nazr Mohammed	.600	—	1.000	7.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.7	7.6	15.2
Mitch McGary	.478	.000	.400	9.0	1.5	0.5	1.0	3.5	5.0	13.0

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS

Year	Wins	Notes
2015-16	55	lost in West finals
2014-15	45	
2013-14	59	lost in West finals
2012-13	60	lost in West semis
2011-12	47	lost in NBA finals

66-game schedule, lockout season

## Dynamic duo always gives Blazers a chance



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### It takes two for Portland to go right

It's pretty much gospel that Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson is the best backcourt in the NBA. **DAMIAN LILLARD** (top) and **C.J. MCCOLLUM** (right) may be number two on that list. They are dynamic, explosive and can demoralize a team from the perimeter, or off the dribble. They are the reason Portland is a play-off team capable of winning the Northwest Division. The Trail Blazers will ride these two — who are reaching their primes — all season. Expect both to score over 20 points per game, and challenge for All-Star consideration.

### Plenty of new faces in town

The Blazers spent a pretty penny on **EVAN TURNER**, the versatile small forward who played with the Boston Celtics last season. They brought in **FESTUS EZELI** from Golden State as well. Turner is a good complement to Lillard and McCollum, and can serve as a primary ballhandler for Portland's second unit. The Blazers shored up their depth, and are probably a team who can challenge for homecourt once the playoffs start.

### Money talks, but will it make a difference?

The Blazers spent over \$70 million each on Turner and **ALLEN CRABBE**. They gave **MOE HARKLESS** \$40 million, as well as signing McCollum to a huge extension. That's a lot of money to fork over for a team that finished fifth in the Western Conference a season ago. How high is Portland's true ceiling? Can they challenge for the conference finals? Because if not, they spent a ton of dough to be good, not great.

— Tony Jones



### TRAIL BLAZERS ROSTER

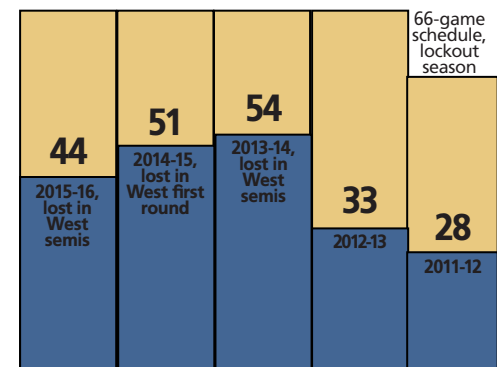
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Mason Plumlee	F	6-11	245	Duke
Damian Lillard	G	6-3	195	Weber St.
C.J. McCollum	G	6-4	200	Lehigh
Shabazz Napier	G	6-1	175	Connecticut
Noah Vonleh	F	6-10	240	Indiana
Al-Farouq Aminu	F	6-9	215	Wake Forest
Ed Davis	F	6-10	240	North Carolina
Luis Montero	G	6-7	185	Westchester CC
Pat Connaughton	G	6-5	206	Notre Dame
Evan Turner	G	6-7	220	Ohio St.
Allen Crabbe	G-F	6-6	210	California
Jake Layman	F	6-9	220	Maryland
Meyers Leonard	C	7-1	245	Illinois
Festus Ezeli	C	6-11	255	Vanderbilt
Maurice Harkless	F-G	6-9	215	St. John's
Tim Quarterman	G	6-6	195	LSU
Grant Jerrett	F	6-10	235	Arizona
Greg Stiemsma	C	6-11	260	Wisconsin
<b>Head Coach » Terry Stotts</b>				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game												
Player	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Damian Lillard	75	35.7	.419	.375	.892	4.0	6.8	0.9	0.4	3.2	2.2	25.1
C.J. McCollum	80	34.8	.448	.417	.827	3.2	4.3	1.2	0.3	2.5	2.3	20.8
Allen Crabbe	81	26.0	.459	.393	.867	2.7	1.2	0.8	0.2	0.8	2.4	10.3
Al-Farouq Aminu	82	28.5	.416	.361	.737	6.1	1.7	0.9	0.6	1.5	2.1	10.2
Mason Plumlee	82	25.4	.516	.000	.642	7.7	2.8	0.8	1.0	1.9	3.1	9.1
Gerald Henderson	72	19.9	.439	.353	.767	2.9	1.0	0.5	0.3	0.9	1.2	8.7
Meyers Leonard	61	21.9	.448	.377	.761	5.1	1.5	0.1	0.3	1.3	3.0	8.4
Ed Davis	81	20.8	.611	—	.559	7.4	1.1	0.7	0.9	0.8	2.5	6.5
Maurice Harkless	78	18.7	.474	.279	.622	3.6	0.9	0.6	0.4	0.8	1.6	6.4
Noah Vonleh	78	15.1	.421	.239	.745	3.9	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.6	1.9	3.6
Brian Roberts	21	6.5	.460	.400	.800	0.6	0.8	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.6	2.9
Chris Kaman	16	7.0	.465	.250	1.000	1.5	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.9	2.8
Tim Frazier	35	7.8	.333	.176	.533	1.1	1.2	0.3	0.0	0.8	0.9	1.5
Cliff Alexander	8	4.5	.500	—	—	0.8	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	1.3
Luis Montero	12	3.5	.263	.111	.750	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.1	1.2
Pat Connaughton	34	4.2	.265	.238	1.000	0.9	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.3	0.2	1.1

Per 36 Minutes												
Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS		
Damian Lillard	.419	.375	.892	4.1	6.9	0.9	0.4	3.3	2.2	25.3		
C.J. McCollum	.448	.417	.827	3.4	4.4	1.3	0.3	2.5	2.4	21.6		
Allen Crabbe	.459	.393	.867	3.7	1.7	1.1	0.3	1.1	3.3	14.2		
Al-Farouq Aminu	.416	.361	.737	7.7	2.1	1.1	0.8	1.8	2.6	12.9		
Mason Plumlee	.516	.000	.642	10.8	3.9	1.2	1.5	2.7	4.4	12.9		
Gerald Henderson	.439	.353	.767	5.3	1.9	1.0	0.5	1.7	2.2	15.7		
Meyers Leonard	.448	.377	.761	8.5	2.5	0.2	0.5	2.1	4.9	13.8		
Ed Davis	.611	—	.559	12.8	1.9	1.2	1.5	1.4	4.3	11.2		
Maurice Harkless	.474	.279	.622	6.9	1.7	1.2	0.9	1.5	3.1	12.3		
Noah Vonleh	.421	.239	.745	9.4	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.5	4.7	8.7		
Brian Roberts	.460	.400	.800	3.2	4.2	0.8	0.3	1.8	3.2	15.8		
Chris Kaman	.465	.250	1.000	7.7	3.5	0.3	0.3	2.6	4.8	14.1		
Tim Frazier	.333	.176	.533	5.2	5.6	1.3	0.1	3.6	4.1	6.8		
Cliff Alexander	.500	—	—	6.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	10.0		
Luis Montero	.263	.111	.750	3.4	0.9	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.9	12.0		
Pat Connaughton	.265	.238	1.000	8.1	2.5	0.5	0.0	2.5	1.5	9.1		

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Are Warriors most star-studded team ever?



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### A team with no weaknesses

Forget the Miami Heat's Big 3 era. Forget the Showtime Era Los Angeles Lakers. In **STEPHEN CURRY** (above), **KEVIN DURANT** (right), **DRAYMOND GREEN** and **KLAY THOMPSON**, a sound argument can be made that this is the most talented group in NBA history. All four are solidly within the top 15 players in the league. Seems unbeatable, but they have to go out and do it.

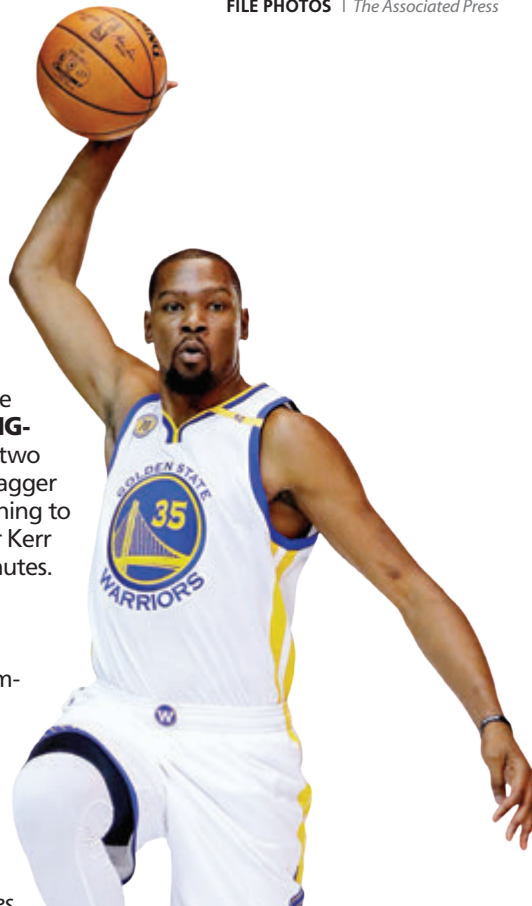
### How high can Golden State reach?

Of course, the other side of being as top-heavy as Golden State is a relative lack of depth. The Warriors do have **SHAUN LIVINGSTON** and **ANDRE IGUODALA**, but the bench beyond those two is thin. Golden State coach **STEVE KERR** is going to have to stagger his rotations creatively to compensate for that. But the good thing to having four stars, instead of three, is that it becomes easier for Kerr to keep at least one of them on the floor for the entire 48 minutes.

### Chasing the ghosts of the postseason

These Warriors are so stacked that the only competition is seemingly themselves. On paper, they are better and more talented than any team in the league. That's a lot of pressure to carry for 82 games, as well as the postseason, pressure which Golden State ultimately succumbed to in last year's NBA Finals against the Cleveland Cavaliers. This team probably learned lessons from that defeat. Expect the Warriors to be better for it this time around.

— Tony Jones



### WARRIORS ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Stephen Curry	G	6-3	185	Davidson
Klay Thompson	G	6-7	205	Washington St.
Andre Iguodala	G	6-6	207	Arizona
Shaun Livingston	G	6-7	182	Peoria Central HS
Kevon Looney	F	6-9	220	UCLA
Draymond Green	F	6-7	230	Michigan St.
Kevin Durant	F	6-9	240	Texas
David West	F	6-9	250	Xavier
Patrick McCaw	G	6-7	185	UNLV
Zaza Pachulia	C	6-11	270	Georgia
Damian Jones	C	7-0	245	Vanderbilt
Anderson Varejao	F	6-10	273	Brazil
James Michael McAdoo	F	6-9	230	North Carolina
Ian Clark	G	6-3	175	Belmont
Elliot Williams	G	6-5	190	Memphis
JaVale McGee	C	7-0	270	Nevada
Phil Pressey	G	5-11	175	Missouri
Elgin Cook	F	6-6	206	Oregon
Cameron Jones	G	6-4	185	N. Arizona
Scott Wood	F	6-6	175	N.C. State

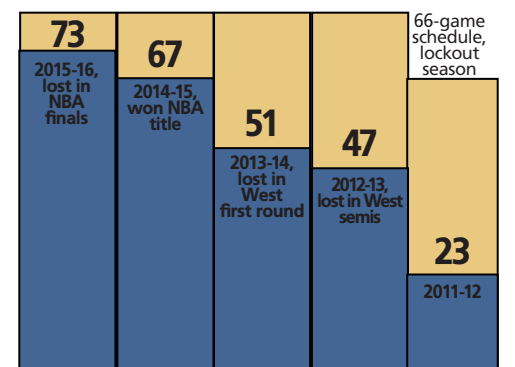
Head Coach » Steve Kerr

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Player	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Stephen Curry	79	34.2	.504	.454	.908	5.4	6.7	2.1	0.2	3.3	2.0	30.1
Klay Thompson	80	33.3	.470	.425	.873	3.8	2.1	0.8	0.6	1.7	1.9	22.1
Draymond Green	81	34.7	.490	.388	.696	9.5	7.4	1.5	1.4	3.2	3.0	14.0
Harrison Barnes	66	30.9	.466	.383	.761	4.9	1.8	0.6	0.2	0.9	2.1	11.7
Marreese Speights	72	11.6	.432	.387	.825	3.3	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.9	1.6	7.1
Andre Iguodala	65	26.6	.478	.351	.614	4.0	3.4	1.1	0.3	1.2	1.6	7.0
Festus Ezeli	46	16.7	.548	—	.530	5.6	0.7	0.4	1.1	0.8	2.0	7.0
Leandro Barbosa	68	15.9	.462	.355	.839	1.7	1.2	0.6	0.1	0.8	1.6	6.4
Shaun Livingston	78	19.5	.536	.167	.860	2.2	3.0	0.7	0.3	1.0	1.8	6.3
Andrew Bogut	70	20.7	.627	1.000	.480	7.0	2.3	0.5	1.6	1.2	3.2	5.4
Brandon Rush	72	14.7	.427	.414	.643	2.5	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.8	4.2
Ian Clark	66	8.8	.441	.357	.824	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.9	3.6
James Michael McAdoo	41	6.4	.536	.500	.531	1.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.4	1.0	2.9
Anderson Varejao	22	8.5	.438	—	.552	2.3	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.3	1.6	2.6
Jason Thompson	28	6.4	.476	—	.625	1.9	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.3	1.4	2.1
Kevon Looney	5	4.2	.571	.500	—	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.4	1.8

Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Stephen Curry	.504	.454	.908	5.7	7.0	2.3	0.2	3.5	2.1	31.7
Klay Thompson	.470	.425	.873	4.1	2.2	0.8	0.7	1.9	2.1	23.9
Draymond Green	.490	.388	.696	9.9	7.7	1.5	1.4	3.3	3.1	14.5
Harrison Barnes	.466	.383	.761	5.7	2.1	0.7	0.2	1.0	2.4	13.6
Marreese Speights	.432	.387	.825	10.3	2.6	0.8	1.5	2.9	5.1	22.2
Andre Iguodala	.478	.351	.614	5.5	4.6	1.5	0.4	1.6	2.1	9.5
Festus Ezeli	.548	—	.530	12.0	1.5	0.8	2.3	1.8	4.4	15.0
Leandro Barbosa	.462	.355	.839	3.9	2.7	1.5	0.3	1.8	3.6	14.4
Shaun Livingston	.536	.167	.860	4.0	5.6	1.4	0.6	1.8	3.3	11.6
Andrew Bogut	.627	1.000	.480	12.2	4.0	0.8	2.8	2.1	5.5	9.3
Brandon Rush	.427	.414	.643	6.2	1.9	0.7	0.8	1.1	1.9	10.4
Ian Clark	.441	.357	.824	4.2	4.0	1.1	0.8	2.7	3.6	14.7
James Michael McAdoo	.536	.500	.531	8.0	2.3	1.4	1.1	2.2	5.4	16.1
Anderson Varejao	.438	—	.552	9.7	2.9	1.0	1.0	1.2	6.8	11.2
Jason Thompson	.476	—	.625	10.9	3.8	0.8	1.6	1.4	8.0	12.1
Kevon Looney	.571	.500	—	17.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	3.4	15.4

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## Clippers try to make star parts come together



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Can all the personalities co-exist?

We know **CHRIS PAUL** (right) and **BLAKE GRIFFIN** (top) can play together, make highlights together, advance to the second round of the playoffs together. But they need to do more. The Western Conference is wide open beyond the Warriors, and this is the year to take advantage of that. They should be able to advance to the conference finals. Neither has ever accomplished that. Legacies are on the line.

### Depth at the wing positions

**PAUL PIERCE** is a shell of his former self. **LUC RICHARD MBAH A MOUTE** is a good defender, and that's all. **WESLEY JOHNSON** is a good athlete, and that's all. **JAMAL CRAWFORD** is getting old. For years, the Clippers have been looking for a small forward, and they don't have one. In a league driven by wing play, this is a huge weakness. How Los Angeles coach **DOC RIVERS** compensates could be as important as the play of the Clipper stars.

### Stardom in the center spot

**DEANDRE JORDAN** isn't conventional for a center. He won't post you up and score for his points. But he's still dynamic in many areas, is coming into his prime, and may be the best big man in the league. He's also probably the best interior defender, and one of the best rebounders. He's rare defensively for his versatility, and cleans up a ton of his teammates' mistakes. He doesn't get enough credit on a team where Griffin and Paul get most of it. Jordan is indispensable.



— Tony Jones

### CLIPPERS ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Blake Griffin	F	6-10	251	Oklahoma
J.J. Redick	G	6-4	190	Duke
Chris Paul	G	6-0	175	Wake Forest
Paul Pierce	F	6-7	235	Kansas
DeAndre Jordan	C	6-11	265	Texas A&M
Austin Rivers	G	6-4	200	Duke
Wesley Johnson	F	6-7	215	Syracuse
Luc Mbah a Moute	F	6-8	230	UCLA
Jamal Crawford	G	6-5	195	Michigan
Marreese Speights	C	6-10	255	Florida
Brice Johnson	F	6-10	230	North Carolina
Diamond Stone	C	6-11	255	Maryland
Raymond Felton	G	6-1	205	North Carolina
Brandon Bass	F	6-8	250	LSU
Alan Anderson	G-F	6-6	220	Michigan St.
Xavier Munford	G	6-3	180	Rhode Island
Dorell Wright	F-G	6-9	205	Leuzinger HS

Head Coach » Doc Rivers

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game												
Player	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Blake Griffin	35	33.4	.499	.333	.727	8.4	4.9	0.8	0.5	2.4	2.7	21.4
Chris Paul	74	32.7	.462	.371	.896	4.2	10.0	2.1	0.2	2.6	2.5	19.5
J.J. Redick	75	28.0	.480	.475	.888	1.9	1.4	0.6	0.1	1.0	1.8	16.3
Jamal Crawford	79	26.9	.404	.340	.904	1.8	2.3	0.7	0.2	1.4	1.5	14.2
DeAndre Jordan	77	33.7	.703	.000	.430	13.8	1.2	0.7	2.3	1.4	2.7	12.7
Jeff Green	27	26.3	.427	.325	.615	3.4	1.5	0.7	0.8	0.9	2.3	10.9
Austin Rivers	67	21.9	.438	.335	.681	1.9	1.5	0.7	0.1	0.9	2.0	8.9
Wesley Johnson	80	20.8	.404	.333	.652	3.1	0.6	1.1	0.7	0.7	2.2	6.9
Paul Pierce	68	18.1	.363	.310	.818	2.7	1.0	0.5	0.3	0.9	1.9	6.1
Josh Smith	32	14.3	.383	.310	.595	3.9	1.3	0.6	1.1	1.3	1.9	5.7
Cole Aldrich	60	13.3	.596	—	.714	4.8	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.1	2.3	5.5
Lance Stephenson	43	15.8	.494	.404	.700	2.5	1.4	0.6	0.1	1.1	1.8	4.7
Luc Mbah a Moute	75	17.0	.454	.325	.526	2.3	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.5	1.3	3.1
C.J. Wilcox	23	7.3	.394	.391	.750	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.7	3.0
Pablo Prigioni	59	13.9	.374	.295	.875	1.9	2.2	0.9	0.0	0.8	1.4	2.5
Jeff Ayres	17	6.3	.522	.000	1.000	1.3	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.4	1.1	1.8
Branden Dawson	6	4.8	.400	—	1.000	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.8
Alex Stepheson	4	3.0	1.000	—	.000	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	1.0	0.5

Per 36 Minutes												
Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS		
Blake Griffin	.499	.333	.727	9.0	5.2	0.9	0.5	2.6	2.9	23.0		
Chris Paul	.462	.371	.896	4.6	11.0	2.3	0.2	2.9	2.8	21.5		
J.J. Redick	.480	.475	.888	2.4	1.8	0.7	0.1	1.3	2.3	21.0		
Jamal Crawford	.404	.340	.904	2.5	3.1	0.9	0.2	1.9	2.1	19.0		
DeAndre Jordan	.703	.000	.430	14.7	1.2	0.7	2.5	1.5	2.9	13.6		
Jeff Green	.427	.325	.615	4.6	2.0	0.9	1.1	1.2	3.1	14.9		
Austin Rivers	.438	.335	.681	3.2	2.4	1.2	0.2	1.5	3.4	14.6		
Wesley Johnson	.404	.333	.652	5.4	1.1	1.9	1.2	1.2	3.7	11.9		
Paul Pierce	.363	.310	.818	5.4	2.1	1.0	0.5	1.7	3.8	12.2		
Josh Smith	.383	.310	.595	9.8	3.3	1.4	2.7	3.2	4.9	14.2		
Cole Aldrich	.596	—	.714	13.0	2.3	2.1	3.1	2.9	6.3	14.8		
Lance Stephenson	.494	.404	.700	5.7	3.2	1.3	0.2	2.5	4.2	10.8		
Luc Mbah a Moute	.454	.325	.526	4.8	0.8	1.2	0.5	1.0	2.8	6.5		
C.J. Wilcox	.394	.391	.750	2.6	2.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	3.2	15.1		
Pablo Prigioni	.374	.295	.875	5.0	5.7	2.3	0.0	2.1	3.6	6.3		
Jeff Ayres	.522	.000	1.000	7.4	1.7	0.0	1.0	2.0	6.1	10.1		
Branden Dawson	.400	—	1.000	5.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	2.5	6.2		
Alex Stepheson	1.000	—	.000	6.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.0	12.0	6.0		

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS

53	56	57	56	66-game schedule, lockout season
2015-16, lost in West first round	2014-15, lost in West semifinals	2013-14, lost in West semifinals	2012-13, lost in West first round	40
				2011-12, lost in West semifinals

## The Lake Show may be must-see reality TV



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### Reining in Russell

The immaturity shown by **D'ANGELO RUSSELL** (top) last season was both striking, and too expansive to list here. The Lakers hope he's grown up a bit, which didn't seem to be the case in July when he hit a game-winner during a summer league game, went live on ESPN and cursed loudly. Still, the Lakers will show plenty of patience with their point guard. His talent is immense. He's a 6-foot-5 lefty who can shoot, handle, is a special passer and wants the ball in the clutch. Those are good attributes to have. Now, if only Russell can do something about his maturity. The direction of the franchise post-Kobe depends on him figuring it out.

### Bryant's locker, Durant's skillset

Speaking of Kobe, now that he's retired, his locker goes to rookie forward **BRANDON INGRAM** (right), a special talent himself. Ingram's not Kevin Durant. But he has some of Durant's characteristics, with his height, length and ability to handle and shoot the ball. He needs to develop. But the cornerstones, him and Russell, are there. Or so the Lakers hope.

### An offseason to be questioned

Armed with a ton of cap space following Bryant's retirement, the Lakers let the money burn a hole in their pockets. That's the only explanation for giving **TIMOFEY MOZGOV** \$64 million. Mozgov went from starting center to deep reserve in Cleveland, struggling to catch passes and finish at the rim. This could be one of the worst contracts in the league for the next four seasons.

— Tony Jones



### LAKERS ROSTER

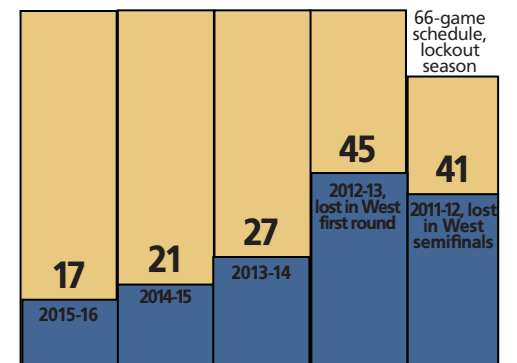
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Jose Calderon	G	6-3	200	Spain
Nick Young	G	6-7	210	USC
Julius Randle	F	6-9	250	Kentucky
D'Angelo Russell	G	6-5	195	Ohio St.
Larry Nance Jr.	F	6-9	230	Wyoming
Lou Williams	G	6-1	175	S. Gwinnett HS
Anthony Brown	F	6-7	210	Stanford
Luol Deng	F	6-9	220	Duke
Timofey Mozgov	C	7-1	275	Russia
Ivica Zubac	C	7-1	240	Bosnia
Jordan Clarkson	G	6-5	185	Missouri
Marcelo Huertas	G	6-3	185	Brazil
Yi Jianlian	F	7-0	238	China
Tarik Black	F	6-9	250	Kansas
Brandon Ingram	F	6-9	190	Duke
Zach Auguste	F	6-10	245	Notre Dame
Thomas Robinson	F	6-10	237	Kansas
Julian Jacobs	G	6-4	180	USC
Travis Wear	F	6-10	230	UCLA
<b>Head Coach »</b> Luke Walton				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Kobe Bryant	66	28.2	.358	.285	.826	3.7	2.8	0.9	0.2	2.0	1.7	17.6
Jordan Clarkson	79	32.3	.433	.347	.804	4.0	2.4	1.1	0.1	1.7	2.1	15.5
Lou Williams	67	28.5	.408	.344	.830	2.5	2.5	0.9	0.3	1.6	1.6	15.3
D'Angelo Russell	80	28.2	.410	.351	.737	3.4	3.3	1.2	0.2	2.5	1.8	13.2
Julius Randle	81	28.2	.429	.278	.715	10.2	1.8	0.7	0.4	1.8	3.0	11.3
Nick Young	54	19.1	.339	.325	.829	1.8	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.6	0.9	7.3
Brandon Bass	66	20.3	.549	.000	.845	4.3	1.1	0.5	0.8	0.6	1.9	7.2
Roy Hibbert	81	23.2	.443	.000	.807	4.9	1.2	0.4	1.4	0.9	3.1	5.9
Larry Nance Jr.	63	20.1	.527	.100	.681	5.0	0.7	0.9	0.4	0.7	2.0	5.5
Metta World Peace	35	16.9	.311	.310	.702	2.5	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.4	1.9	5.0
Marcelo Huertas	53	16.4	.422	.262	.931	1.7	3.4	0.5	0.1	1.5	1.4	4.5
Ryan Kelly	36	13.1	.369	.135	.685	3.4	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.5	1.1	4.2
Anthony Brown	29	20.7	.310	.286	.850	2.4	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.5	1.2	4.0
Robert Sacre	25	12.8	.413	—	.658	2.9	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.5	1.7	3.5
Tarik Black	39	12.7	.548	—	.422	4.0	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	2.0	3.4

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Kobe Bryant	.358	.285	.826	4.8	3.6	1.2	0.3	2.5	2.2	22.4
Jordan Clarkson	.433	.347	.804	4.4	2.7	1.2	0.1	1.9	2.4	17.3
Lou Williams	.408	.344	.830	3.2	3.2	1.2	0.4	2.0	2.0	19.4
D'Angelo Russell	.410	.351	.737	4.4	4.2	1.5	0.2	3.1	2.3	16.8
Julius Randle	.429	.278	.715	13.1	2.3	0.8	0.5	2.3	3.8	14.5
Nick Young	.339	.325	.829	3.4	1.2	0.8	0.2	1.0	1.7	13.7
Brandon Bass	.549	.000	.845	7.6	2.0	0.9	1.5	1.1	3.4	12.7
Roy Hibbert	.443	.000	.807	7.6	1.8	0.6	2.1	1.5	4.8	9.2
Larry Nance Jr.	.527	.100	.681	8.9	1.3	1.5	0.7	1.2	3.5	9.9
Metta World Peace	.311	.310	.702	5.4	1.6	1.3	0.7	0.9	4.1	10.7
Marcelo Huertas	.422	.262	.931	3.7	7.5	1.1	0.3	3.3	3.1	9.8
Ryan Kelly	.369	.135	.685	9.3	1.5	1.0	0.8	1.4	3.0	11.6
Anthony Brown	.310	.286	.850	4.2	1.1	0.8	0.3	0.9	2.0	6.9
Robert Sacre	.413	—	.658	8.1	1.6	0.5	1.1	1.4	4.8	9.8
Tarik Black	.548	—	.422	11.4	1.2	1.0	1.3	1.6	5.7	9.7

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## They could be Kings, if Cousins can lead them



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### The Boogie man can. But will he?

Is this the year **DEMARCUS COUSINS** (top) leads this team to success? He's entering his prime, he's one of the top 10 talents in the league, a load to deal with at center and power forward. He's also a load to deal with, maturity-wise. But if Sacramento is going to take a roster with some veterans and a lot of youth to the postseason, he's going to have to be at his best — on and off the floor.

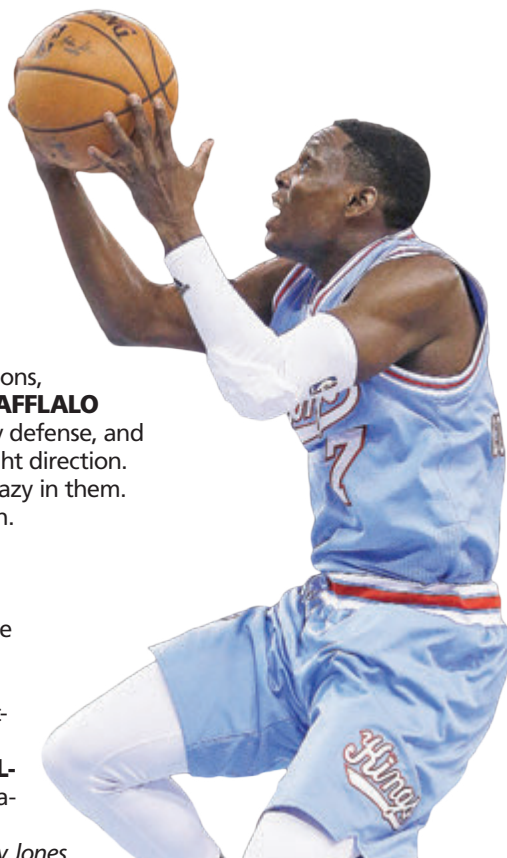
### The veterans' way

The roster has holes, and there have been strange transactions, particularly in the draft. But **MATT BARNES** and **ARRON AFFLALO** were solid additions, two guys who can shoot the ball, play defense, and are stylistic complements to Cousins. That's a step in the right direction. Barnes and Afflalo will work hard, and both have a little crazy in them. That alone makes Sacramento a watchable team this season.

### Running out of time to be taken seriously

Cousins can hit free agency in two years, which makes these next two years pressure-packed for the Kings front office. They may not have to make the playoffs in the next two years, but they need to be trending that direction. And Sacramento needs to figure out what it's going to do with **RUDY GAY**, the talented small forward, and **DARREN COLLISON** (right), who will miss the first eight games of the season. There's a lot going on with this franchise.

— Tony Jones



### KINGS ROSTER

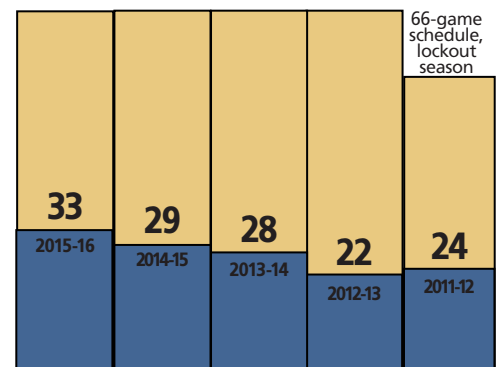
Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
DeMarcus Cousins	F	6-11	270	Kentucky
Ben McLemore	G	6-5	195	Kansas
Rudy Gay	F	6-8	230	Connecticut
Darren Collison	G	6-0	175	UCLA
Willie Cauley-Stein	C	7-0	240	Kentucky
Omri Casspi	F	6-9	225	Israel
Kosta Koufos	C	7-0	265	Ohio St.
Lamar Patterson	G	6-5	225	Pittsburgh
Arron Afflalo	G	6-5	210	UCLA
Garrett Temple	G	6-6	195	LSU
Anthony Tolliver	F	6-8	240	Creighton
Matt Barnes	F	6-7	226	UCLA
Georgios Papagiannis	C	7-1	240	Greece
Malachi Richardson	G	6-6	205	Syracuse
Skal Labissiere	F-C	6-11	225	Kentucky
Ty Lawson	G	5-11	195	North Carolina
Jordan Farmar	G	6-2	180	UCLA
Isaiah Cousins	G	6-5	191	Oklahoma
<b>Head Coach » Doug Joerger</b>				

### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game												
Player	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
DeMarcus Cousins	65	34.6	.451	.333	.718	11.5	3.3	1.6	1.4	3.8	3.6	26.9
Rudy Gay	70	34.0	.463	.344	.780	6.5	1.7	1.4	0.7	2.0	2.6	17.2
Darren Collison	74	30.0	.486	.401	.858	2.3	4.3	1.0	0.1	1.8	1.9	14.0
Rajon Rondo	72	35.2	.454	.365	.580	6.0	11.7	2.0	0.1	3.9	2.4	11.9
Omri Casspi	69	27.2	.481	.409	.648	5.9	1.4	0.8	0.2	1.4	2.2	11.8
Marco Belinelli	68	24.6	.386	.306	.833	1.7	1.9	0.5	0.0	1.2	1.3	10.2
Ben McLemore	68	21.2	.429	.362	.718	2.2	1.2	0.8	0.1	1.5	2.1	7.8
Willie Cauley-Stein	66	21.4	.563	.000	.648	5.3	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.7	2.2	7.0
Kosta Koufos	78	19.0	.532	—	.548	5.4	0.4	0.5	0.9	0.6	2.4	6.8
Seth Curry	44	15.7	.455	.450	.833	1.4	1.5	0.5	0.1	0.8	0.9	6.8
Duje Dukan	1	24.0	.200	.400	—	4.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	6.0
Quincy Acy	59	14.8	.556	.388	.735	3.2	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	1.7	5.2
James Anderson	51	14.1	.376	.267	.759	1.7	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.8	1.1	3.5
Caron Butler	17	10.4	.424	.167	.833	1.3	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.2	1.1	3.7
Eric Moreland	8	6.0	.500	—	.500	1.4	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.4	0.5	1.0

Per 36 Minutes												
Player	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS		
Rajon Rondo	.454	.365	.580	6.2	11.9	2.0	0.1	3.9	2.5	12.2		
Rudy Gay	.463	.344	.780	6.9	1.8	1.5	0.8	2.1	2.8	18.2		
DeMarcus Cousins	.451	.333	.718	12.0	3.4	1.6	1.5	4.0	3.8	28.0		
Darren Collison	.486	.401	.858	2.7	5.2	1.2	0.1	2.1	2.3	16.8		
Omri Casspi	.481	.409	.648	7.9	1.8	1.1	0.3	1.8	2.9	15.6		
Marco Belinelli	.386	.306	.833	2.5	2.7	0.8	0.0	1.7	2.0	15.0		
Kosta Koufos	.532	—	.548	10.3	0.8	1.0	1.7	1.2	4.5	12.9		
Ben McLemore	.429	.362	.718	3.7	2.0	1.3	0.2	2.5	3.5	13.2		
Willie Cauley-Stein	.563	.000	.648	9.0	0.9	1.2	1.7	1.2	3.7	11.8		
Quincy Acy	.556	.388	.735	7.7	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.1	4.2	12.6		
James Anderson	.376	.267	.759	4.3	2.0	1.0	0.7	2.1	2.7	8.9		
Seth Curry	.455	.450	.833	3.1	3.5	1.1	0.2	1.9	2.1	15.6		
Caron Butler	.424	.167	.833	4.5	2.0	1.8	0.2	0.6	3.9	12.9		
Eric Moreland	.500	—	.500	8.2	0.7	0.0	3.0	2.3	3.0	6.0		
Duje Dukan	.200	.400	—	6.0	1.5	1.5	0.0	0.0	3.0	9.0		

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS



## A bright future in the Valley of the Sun



FILE PHOTOS | The Associated Press

### The young Suns will be the top Suns

Simply put, **DEVIN BOOKER** (top) is one of the best young shooting guards in the league. He's capable of lighting opponents up from 3-point land. He can get to the basket off the dribble, and he can score in the mid-range. The Suns got themselves a future star in Booker. They also have **MARQUESE CHRISS** and **DRAGAN BENDER** and **TYLER ULIS**. The talent of the youth in Phoenix is almost intoxicating.

### Utah Jazz, Pacific Division edition

**EARL WATSON** is the head coach. **TYRONE CORBIN** is an assistant. **MEHMET OKUR** is an assistant. It's like a Jazz reunion in the Valley of the Sun. If Phoenix is going to make a move up the Western Conference standings, these three will have a lot to do with that ascension. Watson said he wanted a lot of the core values of his team to mirror the Jazz teams he played on. Hiring Okur and Corbin was an easy choice for Watson to make when he was putting his staff together.

### Finding Bledsoe a spot

If Phoenix can keep **ERIC BLEDSOE** (right) healthy, it has a terrific point guard, and one young enough to fit in with the group the franchise is trying to develop. Bledsoe is a terrific athlete who can score and defend. He can get to the basket, he can shoot from the perimeter. It's just that durability thing that dogs him. If he can find a way to not get injured every season, the Suns could develop at an even faster pace.

— Tony Jones



### SUNS ROSTER

Player	Pos	Ht	Wt	Previous
Eric Bledsoe	G	6-1	190	Kentucky
Archie Goodwin	G	6-5	200	Kentucky
P.J. Tucker	F	6-6	245	Texas
Alex Len	C	7-1	260	Maryland
T.J. Warren	F	6-8	230	N.C. State
Devin Booker	G	6-6	206	Kentucky
Tyson Chandler	C	7-1	240	Dominguez HS
Brandon Knight	G	6-3	189	Kentucky
John Jenkins	G	6-4	215	Vanderbilt
Alan Williams	F	6-8	260	UC-Santa Barbara
Jared Dudley	F	6-7	225	Boston College
Dragan Bender	F	7-1	220	Bosnia
Leandro Barbosa	G	6-3	194	Brazil
Marquese Chriss	F	6-9	225	Washington
Tyler Ulis	G	5-9	160	Kentucky
Derrick Jones	F	6-7	190	UNLV
Derek Cooke	F	6-9	220	Wyoming
Gracin Bakumanya	C	6-11	220	Congo
<b>Head Coach</b> » Earl Watson				

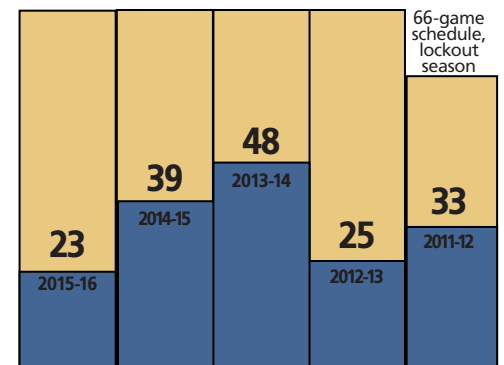
### 2015-16 STATISTICS

Per Game	G	MPG	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
Eric Bledsoe	31	34.2	.453	.372	.802	4.0	6.1	2.0	0.6	3.5	2.4	20.4
Brandon Knight	52	36.0	.415	.342	.852	3.9	5.1	1.2	0.4	3.4	2.4	19.6
Devin Booker	76	27.7	.423	.343	.840	2.5	2.6	0.6	0.3	2.1	3.0	13.8
Mirza Teletovic	79	21.3	.427	.393	.774	3.8	1.1	0.4	0.3	1.1	2.0	12.2
Markieff Morris	37	24.8	.397	.289	.717	5.2	2.4	0.9	0.5	2.4	2.8	11.6
T.J. Warren	47	22.8	.501	.400	.703	3.1	0.9	0.8	0.3	0.7	2.0	11.0
Alex Len	78	23.3	.423	.143	.728	7.6	1.2	0.5	0.8	1.9	2.9	9.0
Archie Goodwin	57	19.5	.417	.232	.674	2.5	2.1	0.5	0.2	1.8	1.5	8.9
Jon Leuer	67	18.7	.481	.382	.762	5.6	1.1	0.6	0.4	1.1	1.9	8.5
P.J. Tucker	82	31.0	.411	.330	.746	6.2	2.2	1.3	0.2	1.4	2.5	8.0
Tyson Chandler	66	24.5	.583	.000	.620	8.7	1.0	0.5	0.7	1.4	2.2	7.2
Ronnie Price	62	19.5	.384	.347	.756	1.6	2.4	1.2	0.2	1.1	2.6	5.3
Jordan McRae	7	11.7	.423	.273	.800	1.1	1.4	0.4	0.0	0.9	1.0	5.3
John Jenkins	22	13.0	.467	.406	.800	1.6	1.2	0.2	0.0	0.7	0.5	5.0
Chase Budinger	17	11.8	.511	.235	.625	1.7	0.9	0.2	0.1	0.8	0.9	3.2
Alan Williams	10	6.8	.417	—	.643	3.8	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.6	1.5	2.9
Cory Jefferson	28	6.3	.409	.000	.667	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	1.0	2.8
Lorenzo Brown	8	7.6	.320	.125	.750	0.9	1.4	0.4	0.1	1.1	0.5	2.5
Sonny Weems	36	11.7	.393	.406	.538	1.1	1.3	0.3	0.0	1.0	1.1	2.5
Phil Pressey	9	12.6	.391	.000	.571	0.9	3.2	0.8	0.3	1.6	1.6	2.4

Per 36 Minutes	FG%	3P%	FT%	REB	AST	STL	BLK	TO	PF	PTS
P.J. Tucker	.411	.330	.746	7.3	2.5	1.5	0.3	1.6	2.9	9.2
Mirza Teletovic	.427	.393	.774	6.4	1.9	0.7	0.4	1.8	3.4	20.6
Alex Len	.423	.143	.728	11.7	1.9	0.8	1.2	2.9	4.5	13.9
Devin Booker	.423	.343	.840	3.2	3.4	0.8	0.3	2.7	3.8	17.9
Jon Leuer	.481	.382	.762	10.7	2.1	1.1	0.9	2.2	3.6	16.3
Tyson Chandler	.583	.000	.620	12.8	1.4	0.8	1.0	2.1	3.2	10.5
Ronnie Price	.384	.347	.756	2.9	4.4	2.2	0.4	2.1	4.8	9.8
Archie Goodwin	.417	.232	.674	4.6	3.8	0.9	0.4	3.2	2.7	16.3
Brandon Knight	.415	.342	.852	3.9	5.1	1.2	0.4	3.4	2.4	19.6
T.J. Warren	.501	.400	.703	4.9	1.5	1.2	0.5	1.1	3.2	17.3
Markieff Morris	.397	.289	.717	7.6	3.4	1.3	0.7	3.5	4.1	16.9
Sonny Weems	.393	.406	.538	3.5	4.0	0.9	0.1	3.2	3.4	7.7
Eric Bledsoe	.453	.372	.802	4.2	6.5	2.1	0.6	3.7	2.5	21.5
John Jenkins	.467	.406	.800	4.4	3.3	0.6	0.1	2.0	1.4	13.7
Chase Budinger	.511	.235	.625	5.2	2.7	0.5	0.2	2.3	2.9	9.9
Alan Williams	.417	—	.643	20.1	2.6	2.1	2.6	3.2	7.9	15.4
Phil Pressey	.391	.000	.571	2.5	9.2	2.2	1.0	4.5	4.5	7.0
Lorenzo Brown	.320	.125	.750	4.1	6.5	1.8	0.6	5.3	2.4	11.8
Cory Jefferson	.409	.000	.667	11.5	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	5.8	15.8
Jordan McRae	.423	.273	.800	3.5	4.4	1.3	0.0	2.6	3.1	16.2

\*—Phoenix had 3 other players play 4 games or less

### PAST VICTORY TOTALS





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