

# THE SPORTIER

## NBA Free Agency: Fast and Furious

Entering the shortened 2020 NBA offseason, many people had low expectations for the depleted free agency class. Nobody expected free agents to fly off the shelves as fast as they have. ESPN NBA Insider Bobby Marks reported that, as of midnight on Sunday, that "85% of roster spots are filled in the NBA." At the time, 2020 Free Agency was only 30 hours old. Even with this less exciting group of players, there were big moves made. One of the biggest and most surprising moves was the Charlotte Hornets who, having drafted LaMelo Ball with the 3rd overall pick in Wednesday's draft, signed Gordon Hayward to a 4 year/\$120 million contract. Hayward has not been the same player as he was in Utah while with the Celtics these past 3 seasons, though he has missed 149 total games in that span. This signing is widely regarded as a poor move by the Hornets because Hayward has shown declining numbers and has proven to be injury-prone, yet they are paying him as if he is a superstar. The Lakers made a splash by replacing Dwight Howard with former Clippers center and Sixth Man of the Year award winner Montrezl Harrell, a young offensive star at the center position. Harrell averaged 18.6 points and 1.7 assists per game off the bench, which trumps Howard's 7.5 points and 0.7 assists per game in a similar situation. Even though Harrell is exceptional, the tradeoff between him and Howard is a slightly worse defense, though statistically it is not extremely apparent. Assuming Anthony Davis re-signs with the team, a three-headed monster of LeBron, Davis, and Harrell is an offensive force. Further, a historic move was made by the Raptors. Guard Fred VanVleet has been a critical part of the team, especially during the 2019 NBA Finals run. VanVleet's signing of a 4 year/\$85 million deal makes history, becoming the largest contract signed by an undrafted player. Free agency is not over, as big names like Anthony Davis and Brandon Ingram have yet to announce their plans. Not even mentioning the countless potential trades, such as deals that landed Chris Paul in Phoenix, Steven Adams in New Orleans, Jrue Holiday in Milwaukee, and the potential deals that could send James Harden and Russell Westbrook out of Houston, all rosters are facing major shakeups less than one month away from the start of the next NBA season.



The newest member of the Charlotte Hornets, Gordon Hayward



The hit that landed Drew Brees on the IR

## Brees' Career In Jeopardy?

In the middle of the second quarter of last week's matchup between the New Orleans Saints and San Francisco 49ers, Drew Brees was hit hard by 49ers defensive end Kentavious Street. Brees seemed shaken up by the sack, but was able to finish the drive with a touchdown. After being pulled from the game at the half, it was determined that Brees had suffered at least 5 fractured ribs, with the number being later updated to 11, with one punctured lung. The 41-year old quarterback is set to miss at least 3 games after being placed on the Injured Reserve list, and Brees believes that he will be ready for the Saints-Eagles matchup in Week 14. This injury is nonetheless significant, as an injury such as this one for a quarterback in the twilight of his career could prematurely force retirement. Drew Brees has been seen as one of the more durable players in the NFL, as he has only missed 6 total games due to injury since his Saints career began in 2006. After suffering significant injuries in back-to-back seasons (UCL tear in thumb last year, 5 missed games), it may be time for the Saints to plan for a quarterback of the future.

# Opinion: The Knicks Finally Get it Right!

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Guest Editorial by Peter Kasper

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With the 7<sup>th</sup> pick of the 2007 NBA draft the Knicks select... For those of you paying attention, you realize the Knicks had the 8<sup>th</sup> pick that year and selected Jordan Hill (Steph Curry was selected 7<sup>th</sup>). And so it goes for the Knicks, seemingly always one pick away. So when the Pistons made the 7<sup>th</sup> pick in this year's draft, I was sure it would be Obi Toppin and the Knicks would be one pick away yet again. Not this time - the Pistons selected Killian Hayes, and the Knicks finally got their guy.

Toppin is a 6'9" power forward who can do it all as a scorer - shoot from the outside, finish in transition, score in the post and take the ball to the basket. He is the reigning National Player of the Year who will stretch the floor, can handle the ball and is an underrated passer. He is a highlight reel dunker who immediately makes the Knicks better. You heard it here first, Toppin will be the NBA's Rookie of the Year.

Later in the first round, the Knicks drafted Kentucky PG Immanuel Quickley, a versatile 3-point shooting point guard who is also considered a very good defender (a plus for new head coach Tom Thibodeau). Quickley, the reigning SEC Player of the Year, averaged 16.1 points and 4.2 rebounds. He shot 42.8 percent from 3 and 92.3 percent from the free throw line - the kid can shoot it.

In addition to drafting two accomplished college players, the Knicks selected two "character" guys, which was readily apparent when listening to Toppin's interview as well as Coach Cal raving about Quickley.

We may not have drafted our version of Stockton and Malone, but it's a start, and a big step in the right direction. Now, if we could only get a free agent to sign with us...

Sources:

[CBS Sports](#), [Twitter \(Bobby Marks\)](#), [Stathead](#), [ESPN](#), [Sports Illustrated](#), [Sportscasting](#)