

PRO HOOPS DRAFTOLOGY 2025

A collective presentation of:
**FANTASYDRAFT HELP.COM, THE
FDH LOUNGE, AFTER FURTHER
REVIEW WITH JONES &
SPORTSOLOGY** under the banner
of **THE 21ST CENTURY MEDIA
ALLIANCE**

June 23, 2025

**RICK MORRIS/BEN CHEW/ RUSS
COHEN/JASON JONES**



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**The FDH Lounge 2025 Pro Hoops
Draft Preview Show:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwZnw2D7M1Y&t=6s>

Welcome! In these pages, you'll be able to read our rankings, both overall and by position. You'll be privy to a list of team needs. You'll be able to read rankings of the talent available in this draft. You'll be able to check out other excellent features, including links to prospect highlight videos. And you'll also be able to peruse a mock draft from FantasyDrafthelp.com and you'll be able to fill out one of your own! All this, and much more, here in PRO HOOPS DRAFTOLOGY 2025!

Fire Nico! Before He Trades Cooper Flag!

As with the 2023 NBA Draft, which featured grand gem Victor Wembanyama, the 2025 NBA Draft contains a gifted prospect who looms high above the rest, Duke combo forward Cooper Flagg. As with Wemby, Flagg will end up playing his pro ball (or at least his INITIAL pro ball, right, Nico Harrison?) in Texas – but unlike the Spurs of 2022-23 who had high odds for the top pick, eyebrows were raised all across the Association when the Mavericks "surmounted slim odds" to grab #1. Local fans who found nothing suspicious about this probably reacted the same way to visiting Dealey Plaza.

Rutgers combo guard Dylan Harper is the consensus #2 pick, while the next tier features a few players who might have been in the mix for the top spot had they been in the 2024 Draft: Rutgers swingman Ace Bailey, Baylor combo guard VJ Edgecombe, Texas shooting guard Tre Johnson, Duke swingman Kon Knueppel and Oklahoma combo guard Jeremiah Fears. Thus, many of the bridesmaids in the Flagg sweepstakes will have good consolation prizes as they turn their next dreams to BYU forward AJ Dybantsa.

It's worth noting that this is a good draft for swingmen overall.

THE TOP 75 PLAYERS IN PRO BASKETBALL HISTORY

The NBA's 75th Anniversary has prompted a wave of Best-Of lists, but few with the substance to reinforce the selections. Authors Rick Morris, Ben Chew and Russ Cohen came together to create a list of the top 75 pro basketball players ever, with evidence to justify the placement of each -- as well as biographical details, comparisons of various legends, little-known-but-interesting tidbits, what-if scenarios and much more. Additionally, the book includes our year-by-year ranking of the top players in pro basketball and rosters for hypothetical "Olympic Dream Teams" had they existed prior to 1992. This is a book that is crafted for sports fans who are interested in learning more about the rich history of pro basketball.

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PRO HOOPS DRAFTOLOGY 2025 PAGE 2

Centers

1	Khama Maluach
2	Derik Queen
3	Collin Murray-Boyles
4	Thomas Sorber
5	Joan Beringer
6	Danny Wolf
7	Rasheer Fleming
8	Ryan Kalkbrenner
9	Maxime Raynaud
10	Alex Condon

Point Guards

1	Dylan Harper
2	VJ Edgecombe
3	Jeremiah Fears
4	Kasparas Jakucionis
5	Nolan Traore
6	Ben Saraf
7	Jase Richardson
8	Walter Clayton
9	Milos Uzan
10	Kam Jones

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FDH Senior Editor
Jason Jones breaks
down football, hoops
and comic book
franchises in depth.**

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2024-25 Team UQB Rankings

FantasyDrafthelp.com and The FDH Lounge are expanding the UQB concept to team sports. Our rankings are a mashup of the following measures: a strength of schedule metric, offensive rating, defensive rating, EFG, TS%, Asst/TO ratio, 3% and a modified Win Share formula.

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1	Cleveland
2	Oklahoma City
3	Boston
4	Denver
5	Minnesota
6	Indiana
7	Milwaukee
8	New York
9	LA Clippers
10	Memphis
11	LA Lakers
12	Golden State
13	Phoenix
14	Houston
15	Sacramento
16	Detroit
17	Miami
18	Chicago
19	Dallas
20	Atlanta
21	San Antonio
22	Orlando
23	Toronto
24	Philadelphia
25	Portland
26	Brooklyn
27	Utah
28	New Orleans
29	Charlotte
30	Washington

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**Did you stay away from players like who would have
tanked your team last year like Kyle Kuzma?**

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Top 10 For The Next 10

The FDH Top 10 for the Next 10 is a list attempting to identify the best players in the league -- not necessarily in a pure fantasy sense -- over the course of the entire next decade. It's not a pure 25-and-under draft, but it skews heavily in that direction because most big-time stars are past their primes in their late 30s. Players who are both very young and very skilled already have the biggest edges.

1 Anthony Edwards
2 Nikola Jokic
3 Luka Doncic
4 Victor Wembanyama
5 Evan Mobley
6 Shai Gilgeous-Alexander
7 Tyrese Haliburton
8 Cade Cunningham
9 Paolo Banchero
10 Chet Holmgren
HONORABLE MENTION
Cooper Flagg
Tyrese Maxey
Alperen Sengun
Franz Wagner
Jalen Williams

Strength of Draft By Position

GREAT: none
VERY GOOD: SG, SF
GOOD: PG
AVERAGE: none
BELOW-AVERAGE: PF
POOR: C
HORRIBLE: none

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What initially began as a small coalition of like-minded growing New Media organizations has flourished into a well-rounded creative juggernaut of more than two dozen entities that transcends the notion of traditional labeling. The 21st Century Media Alliance is an umbrella of cooperative companies and professionals that is pursuing many synergistic opportunities and projects. Possessed of varying yet often complementary skill sets, Alliance members are bound by their core principles of inventiveness, communication, pragmatism and dedication to their efforts and those of the larger group. In a great many creative areas, if you're looking to have a job performed the right way, chances are that you need look no further than The 21st Century Media Alliance.

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FDH Mock Draft

	Team	Player	Positon	Ht	Wt	School/Country
1	Dallas	Cooper Flagg	SF/PF	6/9	220	Duke
2	San Antonio	Dylan Harper	PG/SG	6/6	215	Rutgers
3	Philadelphia	Ace Bailey	SG/SF	6/9	205	Rutgers
4	Charlotte	VJ Edgecombe	PG/SG	6/5	195	Baylor
5	Utah	Tre Johnson	SG	6/6	190	Texas
6	Washington	Jeremiah Fears	PG/SG	6/4	180	Oklahoma
7	New Orleans	Kon Knueppel	SG/SF	6/7	215	Duke
8	Brooklyn	Kasparas Jakucionis	PG/SG	6/6	205	Illinois
9	Toronto	Khama Maluach	C	7/2	255	Duke
10	Phoenix	Carter Bryant	SF	6/8	215	Arizona
11	Portland	Collin Murray-Boyles	PF/C	6/8	240	South Carolina
12	Chicago	Derik Queen	C	6/10	250	Maryland
13	Atlanta	Egor Demin	SG/SF	6/9	200	BYU
14	San Antonio	Liam McNeeley	SF	6/8	215	UConn
15	Oklahoma City	Danny Wolf	C	7/0	250	Michigan
16	Memphis	Cedric Coward	SG/SF	6/6	205	Washington St
17	Minnesota	Jase Richardson	PG/SG	6/2	180	Michigan St
18	Washington	Asa Newell	PF	6/10	225	Georgia
19	Brooklyn	Thomas Sorber	C	6/10	265	Georgetown
20	Miami	Nique Clifford	SG	6/6	200	Colorado
21	Utah	Noa Essengue	SF/PF	6/10	200	France
22	Atlanta	Nolan Traore	PG	6/4	185	France
23	New Orleans	Joan Beringer	PF/C	6/10	230	France
24	Oklahoma City	Ben Saraf	PG/SG	6/6	200	Israel
25	Orlando	Walter Clayton	PG	6/3	200	Florida
26	Brooklyn	Will Riley	SG/SF	6/9	185	Illinois
27	Brooklyn	Rasheer Fleming	PF/C	6/9	240	St Joseph
28	Boston	Maxime Raynaud	C	7/1	240	Stanford
29	Phoenix	Hugo Gonzalez	SF	6/6	200	Spain
30	LA Clippers	Ryan Kalkbrenner	C	7/2	260	Creighton

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We publish a series of guides such as this through the year as a partnership between Sportsology, The FDH Lounge, FantasyDrafthelp.com and other entities under the banner of The 21st Century Media Alliance. Fantasy Racing (mid-February), Fantasy Baseball (mid-March), NFL Draft (mid-April), NHL Entry Draft (mid-June), NBA Draft (mid-June), Fantasy Football (late July), Fantasy Hockey (mid-September), Fantasy Hoops (mid-October).

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Preview Of FantasyDrafthelp.com Ultimate Fantasy Hoops Stat For 2024-25

This is the FantasyDrafthelp.com statistic, the Ultimate Quantitative Baseline, based on the statistical principle of standard deviation from the mean. We utilize the standard fantasy categories: PPG, RPG, APG, ST, BL, TO, FG%, FT% and 3%. In each category, a spectrum is calculated from the best performance to the worst on a per-game basis. The numbers in each category are added together to create our statistic. An additional equalizer is injected to apply more points to each player at the positions of scarcer depth. What this stat truly does is to quantify beyond doubt how the stronger and weaker performances in each category add up to the absolute fantasy value for each player. As such, it establishes a baseline for performance that is more comprehensive than anything ever developed. A number over 1000 is considered elite. We have listed below the top 25 forwards and guards, top 15 centers and top 30 overall.

Guards		QB	Forwards		QB	Top 30 Overall		QB
1	SGA	1334	1	Giannis Antetokounmpo	1354	1	Nikola Jokić	1797
2	Josh Hart	1107	2	Anthony Davis	1321	2	Giannis Antetokounmpo	1354
3	Luka Dončić	1048	3	Sam Hauser	976	3	SGA	1334
4	Christian Braun	999	4	Evan Mobley	956	4	Anthony Davis	1321
5	Tyrese Maxey	894	5	Jayson Tatum	923	5	Karl-Anthony Towns	1182
6	Tyrese Haliburton	877	6	Kevin Durant	858	6	Domantas Sabonis	1158
7	Damian Lillard	869	7	Jalen Johnson	851	7	Josh Hart	1107
8	Kyrie Irving	868	8	LeBron James	803	8	Victor Wembanyama	1092
9	Jalen Brunson	859	9	Aaron Nesmith	801	9	Luka Dončić	1048
10	Stephen Curry	830	10	Franz Wagner	783	10	Christian Braun	999
11	Devin Booker	822	11	John Collins	780	11	Sam Hauser	976
12	Josh Giddey	821	12	Kawhi Leonard	763	12	Evan Mobley	956
13	Anthony Edwards	789	13	Amen Thompson	753	13	Tyrese Maxey	894
14	Desmond Bane	774	14	Trey Murphy III	752	14	Tyrese Haliburton	877
15	Tyler Herro	770	15T	Zach LaVine	729	15	Nikola Vučević	870
			15T	Cameron Johnson	729	16	Jalen Brunson	859

Centers

QB

1	Nikola Jokić	1797
2	Karl-Anthony Towns	1182
3	Domantas Sabonis	1158
4	Victor Wembanyama	1092
5	Nikola Vučević	870
6	Kristaps Porziņģis	806
7	Jakob Poeltl	771
8	Jonas Valančiūnas	745
9	Chet Holmgren	737
10	Jaren Jackson Jr.	706
11	Myles Turner	700
12	Bam Adebayo	697
13	Brook Lopez	695
14	Onyeka Okongwu	668
15	Joel Embiid	651

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Jones breaks down football,
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The FDH Top 30 Players In The NBA

NOTE: These are the top 30 players in the NBA at the present time – averaging one per team in the league – by determination of FDH Managing Partner Rick Morris. Their ranking in last year's analysis is in parentheses. Players who were included last year, but not this year, are listed below.

TOP TIER

- 1 Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (5)
- 2 Nikola Jokic (1)
- 3 Anthony Edwards (3)
- 4 Luka Doncic (2)
- 5 Stephen Curry (7)
- 6 Giannis Antetokounmpo (6)
- 7 *Jayson Tatum (8)
- 7 *Tyrese Haliburton (9)
- 7 Donovan Mitchell (11)
- 8 Jalen Brunson (12)
- 9 Victor Wembanyama (10)
- 10 LeBron James (13)

SECOND TIER

- 11 Kevin Durant (15)
- 12 Cade Cunningham (NA)
- 13 Paolo Banchero (18)
- 14 Evan Mobley (NA)
- 15 Jalen Williams (22)
- 16 Darius Garland (NA)
- 17 Tyrese Maxey (19)
- 18 Devin Booker (14)
- 19 Chet Holmgren (24)
- 20 Jaylen Brown (17)
- 21 Domantas Sabonis (28)

THIRD TIER

- 22 De'Aaron Fox (26)
- 23 Franz Wagner (NA)
- 24 Trae Young (NA)
- 25 Alperen Sengun (27)
- 26 Jimmy Butler (21)
- 27 Rudy Gobert (25)
- 28 Pascal Siakam (NA)
- 29 James Harden (30)
- 30 Julius Randle (NA)

- Joel Embiid (4)
Jamal Murray (16)
Paul George (20)
Kyrie Irving (23)
Karl-Anthony Towns (29)

*Denotes where Haliburton and Tatum would have placed if healthy.

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Links to Highlight Videos of Top Prospects

Here are links to some of the best players of the '25 Draft in action:

Ace Bailey <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=112fXZeFBoo>
Cooper Flagg <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzk5689BjC8>
Dylan Harper https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7JDMEF_gCA
Jeremiah Fears <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5SFQdQLpy0>
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Tre Johnson https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__U26ljmHrs
VJ Edgecombe <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHSr6ZRcSro>

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2025-26 FDH NBA All-Stars By Division

Atlantic Division

PG Jalen Brunson
PG Tyrese Maxey
SG Derrick White
SG Cam Thomas
SF Jaylen Brown
SF Mikal Bridges
PF Jayson Tatum
PF OG Anunoby
C Karl-Anthony Towns
C Jakob Poeltl

Central Division

PG Tyrese Haliburton
PG Darius Garland
SG Donovan Mitchell
SG Ty Jerome
SF De'Andre Hunter
SF Aaron Nesmith
PF Giannis Antetokounmpo
PF Evan Mobley
C Myles Turner
C Jarrett Allen

Southeast Division

PG Trae Young
PG Jalen Suggs
SG Tyler Herro
SG Dyson Daniels
SF Franz Wagner
SF Jalen Johnson
PF Paolo Banchero
PF Miles Bridges
C Bam Adebayo
C Mark Williams

Northwest Division

PG Shai Gilgeous-Alexander
PG Jamal Murray
SG Anthony Edwards
SG Jalen Williams
SF Michael Porter Jr
SF Luguentz Dort
PF Chet Holmgren
PF Julius Randle
C Nikola Jokic
C Rudy Gobert

Pacific Division

PG Stephen Curry
PG Luka Doncic
SG Devin Booker
SG Zach LaVine
SF LeBron James
SF Jimmy Butler
PF Kevin Durant
PF Harrison Barnes
C Domantas Sabonis
C Ivica Zubac

Southwest Division

PG Kyrie Irving
PG De'Aaron Fox
SG Jalen Green
SG Desmond Bane
SF Amen Thompson
SF Keldon Johnson
PF Anthony Davis
PF PJ Washington
C Alperen Sengun
C Jaren Jackson Jr

2025-26 NBA Predicted Standings

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

X-New York 57-25
Y-Boston 44-38
y-Philadelphia 39-43
y-Brooklyn 36-46
Toronto 34-48

CENTRAL DIVISION

X-Cleveland 60-22
Y-Detroit 48-34
y-Indiana 40-42
y-Chicago 38-44
Milwaukee 24-58

SOUTHEAST DIVISION

X-Orlando 56-26
Y-Atlanta 46-36
Miami 32-50
Washington 22-60
Charlotte 21-61

WESTERN CONFERENCE

SOUTHWEST DIVISION

X-Houston 46-36
y-San Antonio 43-39
Dallas 40-42
Memphis 39-43
New Orleans 12-70

NORTHWEST DIVISION

X-Oklahoma City 61-21
Y-Denver 56-26
Y-Minnesota 55-27
Portland 28-54
Utah 18-66

PACIFIC DIVISION

X-LA Lakers 57-25
Y-Golden State 45-37
y-LA Clippers 44-38
y-Sacramento 42-40
y-Phoenix 41-41

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PLAY-IN ROUND

Indiana over Philadelphia
Brooklyn over Chicago
Philadelphia over Brooklyn
LA Clippers over San Antonio
Sacramento over Phoenix
San Antonio over Sacramento

CONFERENCE QUARTERFINALS

1 Cleveland over 8 Philadelphia in 5
7 Indiana over 2 New York in 7
3 Orlando over 6 Boston in 6
5 Atlanta over 4 Detroit in 7
1 Oklahoma City over 8 San Antonio in 5
2 LA Lakers over 7 LA Clippers in 6
3 Denver over 6 Golden State in 6

CONFERENCE SEMIFINALS

1 Cleveland over 5 Atlanta in 5
3 Orlando over 7 Indiana in 7
1 Oklahoma City over 4 Minnesota in 6
2 LA Lakers over 3 Denver in 7
CONFERENCE FINALS

1 Cleveland over 3 Orlando in 6
1 Oklahoma City over 2 LA Lakers in 6
NBA FINALS

Oklahoma City over Cleveland in 6

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2025 NBA Draft Team Draft Needs

Atlanta: C

Boston: C, PG, SG, SF

Brooklyn: SF, C, PG, PF

Charlotte: SF, C

Chicago: PF, SG, C, SF

Cleveland: C

Dallas: PG, SF, SG

Denver: SF, PF, PG

Detroit: SF, C, PF

Golden State: SG, C

Houston: SG

Indiana: SF, PG

LA Clippers: PF

LA Lakers: C

Memphis: SF, PF

Miami: PG, C

Milwaukee: SF, PG, C, SG, PF

Minnesota: PG

New Orleans: C, SF, PF, SG

New York: PG

Oklahoma City: C

Orlando: C, PG

Philadelphia: PF, C, SF

Phoenix: C, SF, PG

Portland: SF, C

Sacramento: PG, PF

San Antonio: PF, SF

Toronto: C, PG

Utah: SG

Washington: PG, PF, SF

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Blank Mock Draft Worksheet

- 1 Dallas
- 2 San Antonio
- 3 Philadelphia
- 4 Charlotte
- 5 Utah
- 6 Washington
- 7 New Orleans
- 8 Brooklyn
- 9 Toronto
- 10 Phoenix
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- 12 Chicago
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- 14 San Antonio
- 15 Oklahoma City
- 16 Memphis
- 17 Minnesota
- 18 Washington
- 19 Brooklyn
- 20 Miami
- 21 Utah
- 22 Atlanta
- 23 New Orleans
- 24 Oklahoma City
- 25 Orlando
- 26 Brooklyn
- 27 Brooklyn
- 28 Boston
- 29 Phoenix
- 30 LA Clippers

2025 Free Agency Preview

By Rick Morris/The FDH Lounge

In the modern NBA, every free agency crop begins with the Kabuki Dance of players who in all likelihood will not hit the market, but could become free agents. Fred Van Vleet (club option) and the player option candidates, LeBron James, Kyrie Irving, Khris Middleton, John Collins, James Harden and Julius Randle are all unlikely to change teams.

Among the players who are in play to change teams, the crop is decent at best. Myles Turner looms far above a group of decent big men (Brook Lopez, Clint Capela, Naz Reid, Mo Wagner and Al Horford).

Among swingmen, Bruce Brown is pretty certain to get another good payday. Duncan Robinson has an opt-out that might be worth exercising. Carius LeVert, Tim Hardaway Jr, Luke Kennard, Gary Trent Jr and Ty Jerome are other notables.

Point guard isn't a terribly strong position, with Malcolm Brogdon, D'Angelo Russell, Dennis Schroder, Chris Paul and Tre Jones offering options.

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DRAFTOLOGY GUIDES

We publish a series of guides such as this through the year as a partnership between Sportsology, The FDH Lounge, FantasyDrafthelp.com and other entities under the banner of The 21st Century Media Alliance. Fantasy Racing (mid-February), Fantasy Baseball (mid-March), NFL Draft (mid-April), NHL Entry Draft (mid-June), NBA Draft (mid-June), Fantasy Football (mid-July), Fantasy Hockey (mid-September), Fantasy Hoops (mid-October).

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Recommended NBA Divisions Post-Expansion

With the strong rumors that Seattle and Las Vegas are likely to be brought in via expansion comes speculation about the format of the league once they are admitted. Here is the FDH recommendation for the new divisional structure.

EASTERN CONFERENCE	WESTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division	Southwest Division
Boston	Dallas
Brooklyn	Houston
Charlotte	Las Vegas
Miami	Memphis
New York	New Orleans
Orlando	Oklahoma City
Philadelphia	Phoenix
Washington	San Antonio
Central Division	Pacific Division
Atlanta	Denver
Chicago	Golden State
Cleveland	LA Clippers
Detroit	LA Lakers
Indiana	Portland
Milwaukee	Sacramento
Minnesota	Seattle
Toronto	Utah

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The New Era Is Finally Fully Here

By Rick Morris/The FDH Lounge

In the words of one of the 21st Century's finest lyricists, Mike Shinoda, "from now to infinity, let icons be bygones."

Let's begin this analysis by tracking how we have tracked the NBA's evolution in the early 2020s from this space in last year's guide:

"In this space in 2023, we proclaimed 'The Crossover in Eras is Ending.' In this space in 2021, we proclaimed 'NBA (Mildly Increasing) Parity: It's Fan-Tastic!' So, we've been on the topic the past few years about how the transition from one era to another one in the game was proceeding a little slower than usual ... It's been a fascinating time of cross-pollination between eras with the old and the new overlapping, but heading into 2023-24, it seemed inevitably to be coming to a close. The series that may signal the definitive end of the previous era came in the opening round of the playoffs, when Minnesota curb-stomped Phoenix's latest attempt at a megastar-driven 'Dream Team.' Indeed, the Wolves may have ended another era, that of the Banana Boat, going all the way back to Boston's star-stacking of 2007-08. In today's league, young teams such as Oklahoma City and Minnesota have the chance to dispatch teams with far greater experience, which definitely is a new development ... In this space in 2022, we proclaimed 'As We Predicted, More Room at the Top in the 2020s.' This decade is already 1970s-like in terms of teams making and winning the Finals, so just think how we'll look back at this decade compared to the other recent ones with a few consolidated teams at the top – considering that the likes of Oklahoma City, Minnesota, San Antonio, Cleveland, New York or Philadelphia could still join the party."

Well, the transition is fully over now. We're in the new era.

Boston was perhaps the primary crossover team between the 2010s and now and speculation about how the team might tiptoe away from their gargantuan salary cap obligations was rendered moot by Jayson Tatum's horrific injury, which will keep him out next season. With no pretense of true contention next year, Boston will now downsize without hesitation while hoping to be on the fringes of the title picture in 2026-27..

The only other big power from the 2010s still hanging around, Golden State, was slain by Minnesota in the second round almost as ruthlessly as the Wolves dispatched the Suns in the 2024 opening round. Their big rivals from 2015-18, the Cavs, are in the thick of contention, but they have performed the exceedingly rare feat of moving from championship contention to championship contention with a complete teardown in between. Tristan Thompson being a common denominator doesn't constitute continuity! Plus, he bounced around the league between the last glory days and his return.

As we've forecast for years, the list of champions this decade will be longer than most other decades. New era representatives Cleveland, Minnesota and New York are already on or close to the doorstep. And with the quick come-up of Oklahoma City, who's to say that San Antonio (of course, with Wemby bouncing back health-wise) couldn't do the same? Or Houston or Orlando, with necessary tweaks?

The NBA transitioning away from TNT to NBC/Peacock and Amazon for their non-Disney programming represents to many fans a new beginning, or perhaps a throwback to days gone by with Michael Jordan and Roundball Rock again blanketing Association coverage. Regardless, the NBA that they are inheriting is now fully through the transition at the top that has lingered all decade long.

Depth Is The New Hotness

By Rick Morris/The FDH Lounge

Nothing fuels the copycat tendencies of the NBA like success, and when you consider that the league's top two teams in terms of regular season records (Oklahoma City and Cleveland) and the NBA Finalists (OKC again and Indiana) practiced an unorthodox form of depth-building and utilization, it won't take long before the rest of the league figures out that this is now a strong component in building a better mousetrap.

As is the case with trends in other sports, analytics is playing a role. In the NFL, the numbers have increasingly pushed coaches to go for it on fourth down and in MLB, uppercut swings have only been one of the developments to come from Statcast data. In the NBA, pace-and-space is becoming the predominant style, with games that are much faster-paced than even five years ago. A coach like Tom Thibodeau, who relentlessly jacks up the minutes with his starters, leaves them with their tongues hanging out in the fourth quarter, as the Deep Pace King Pacers demonstrated in the recent Eastern Conference Finals.

But if there's any hope of teaching an old dog new tricks, then Thibs can marshal his considerable Xs and Os strengths and bounce back. Consider JB Bickerstaff, whose termination in Cleveland in 2024 came in part because of his tendency to shorten the bench excessively. In a strong bounceback season in Detroit, JB piled a somewhat questionable 35.0 MPG on Cade Cunningham, but even that was only tied for 23rd in the NBA. There were no other Pistons in the top 50 of MPG. Bickerstaff's evolution points to what will now be a new league-wide trend, one that parallels the strong player development move that we've tracked for five years now: building rotations that push towards being ten-deep that allow for plentiful mix-and-match combos.