

# Fear the All-Star break effect

## NBA stars to trade before they fade

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Special to amNewYork

Every season, several NBA stars experience statistical declines after the mid-February All-Star break — this year's game is in New Orleans on Feb. 17. As a fantasy basketball owner, it's in your best interest to identify these at-risk players and try to trade them away while their value is at its peak. Here are five stars to monitor:

### Fantasy Reality



#### Jason Kidd, PG, Nets

Jason Kidd is revered for his ability to accrue a near triple-double every night. However, his points per game have traditionally dropped noticeably after the All-Star break.

In each of the last two years, Kidd's ppg have slipped by 3.0 and 3.7 points after the break. Additionally, Kidd has never rebounded or assisted at the rate that he has this season (8.3 rebounds, 10.4 assists).

Because Kidd turns 35 in March, common sense would suggest that he will not maintain his impressive statistical averages. He seems to be a classic sell-high candidate, so be sure to trade him to the highest bidder; the Nets appear likely to do the same.

#### Steve Nash, PG, Phoenix

Much like Kidd, Nash is celebrated for his high assists average (11.9 this season, plus 17.6 points).

However, his assists average was slashed by two after the All-Star break two years ago, though he dipped only slightly during the same period last season.

Nash's scoring average has slowed in the second half of each of the past three seasons. His rates have been chipped by 2.8, 1.5 and 1.8 points during that span, a sizeable change for a player who scores in the high teens.

Although Nash is averaging only 34 minutes per night, his playing time could increase as the Suns jockey for playoff positioning. His soon-to-be-34-year-old body could finally break down with the extra minutes, so trading Nash for an impact player, and another player who shores up a weak statistical category, is a wise move.

#### Tim Duncan, PF, San Antonio

It might seem preposterous to trade one of the NBA's most consistent players (he's averaging 19.5 points, 11.1 rebounds and 1.8 blocks this season). But after taking a look at Duncan's post-All-Star break numbers,

it might be outlandish to not trade him.

Duncan's scoring average has diminished by 2.7, 2.5, 2.6 and 1.3 points per game in each of the last four post-All-Star breaks. And his rebounding average slid by an average of 1.7 boards per game from 2003-05, before slightly decreasing during the second half of last season.

One culprit for the Big Fundamental's statistical dip is that he logs fewer minutes after the All-Star break. The 31-year-old averaged four fewer minutes per game over the past four post-All-Star breaks. The Spurs need Duncan healthy for their annual lengthy post-season runs, so they rest him. Be aware of this as you position your Duncan-led team for the stretch run.

#### Richard Hamilton, SG, Detroit

If you own Rip, chances are that's because he is a dependable scorer with 19.1 ppg. But how dependable can Hamilton be when his scoring average drastically falls after each All-Star break?

In 2002 and 2003, Hamilton, 29, experienced points-per-game dips of 1.0 and 1.5. During each the last three post-All-Star breaks, though, he's shown declines of 3.5, 4.1 and 5.5 points — and he's taken at least two fewer shots per game in the second halves of the last three seasons. Given that Hamilton's greatest statistical contribution is scoring, any owner who keeps Rip on his team after the break should expect his value to decrease. Trade him now while his value is still relatively high.

#### Baron Davis, PG, Golden State

To basketball fans, Baron's exuberant and dynamic style of play is something to behold. But while Davis (averaging 22.3 points, 8.1 assists, 4.8 rebounds and 2.5 steals this year) is one of the game's best players, he's also one of its most injury-prone.

Davis, 28, has averaged just 18 games in the second half of the last five seasons as his brittle body breaks down from the season's wear and tear. This year, Davis is averaging 39 minutes, his highest since 2003-04, and playing Warriors coach Don Nelson's up-tempo style will tire out a player with questionable durability.

Baron scored 1.9 fewer points per game and posted 1.8 fewer assists per game after the All-Star break last season, as Nelson, with an eye toward keeping Davis healthy for the playoffs, played his point guard seven fewer minutes per game. With the Warriors poised to make another playoff run this season, expect Nelson to rest Davis just as much as last year. And don't be upset if you keep Davis on your team, and he gets injured, his numbers decline, or both.

Tim Duncan, above, Jason Kidd, left, and Baron Davis, middle of page  
(All photos: Getty Images)

Steve Nash, left; Richard Hamilton, right

