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# Can Zach cook a Curry?

## Two star big men and a quandary

By Kyle Stack  
Special to amNewYork

The Knicks have a problem: They have to figure out how to mesh Zach Randolph and Eddy Curry, two talented low-post players, so that they become the duo that lifts the team from mediocrity into the playoffs. Both men are top-flight scorers — Curry averaged 19.5 points for the Knicks last year and Randolph, acquired in a draft-day trade with Portland, averaged 23.6 points and 10.1 rebounds for the Trail Blazers.

Curry, a center, lives in the low post, while the power forward Randolph has the agility and shooting range to face up to the basket from a dozen feet away.

Isiah Thomas, the Knicks president and coach, brought Randolph and Curry to New York. Now he must decide how best to use his new frontcourt in view of the players' differences and weaknesses.

"I'm assuming Isiah will use a lot of double-post sets, where Zach and Eddy each



Eddy Curry is best down low. His new teammate, Zach Randolph, is comfortable in the high post. (Getty Images)

take a block," said Lang Whitaker, the executive editor at Slam Magazine. "Zach is much better at shooting face-up jumpers than Eddy, so if they have to bring one guy away from the basket, it'll be Zach."

Even when a low-post duo has the basketball skills to thrive together, there are other factors that are necessary for a

duo to succeed, said Fordham University head basketball coach Derek Whittenburg. "The whole psyche of two talented guys playing together is whether they can co-exist by one simple factor: winning," Whittenburg said. "Can they be patient and accept what the game plan is?"



Whittenburg

## Duos of note

Kevin McHale and Robert Parish ruled the '80s together in Boston along with Larry Bird, leading the Celtics to three NBA Championships.

In the two full seasons Ralph Sampson and Hakeem Olajuwon played together in the mid-'80s, the Houston Rockets made the Western Conference Finals.

Tim Duncan and David Robinson are the best recent example of low-post success. Duncan joined Robinson in 1997, and the duo won two NBA titles for San Antonio over the next six seasons. (Kyle Stack)

Neither player is known for his passing, although they needn't pass like point guards, said Whitaker.

"Passing out of double teams doesn't have to be brain surgery," Whitaker said. "As long as the Knicks can rotate open players toward Eddy or Zach, they'll have opportunities to get the ball out of the double."

Said Whittenburg of the problem of blending the two stars: "I think it's a good problem to have."

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