

Cavaliers fans might disagree on a lot of things in the weeks leading up to the trading deadline. But there is one thing we can all agree on: The Cavs need a point guard. Badly. In this excellent piece from Erik Cassano, Papa Cass takes a look at all the available point guards out there on the trade market, and assesses the Cavaliers realistic chances of acquiring each of them. Another day off tonight, then the Celtics, at The Q, 7 PM on Super Tuesday.



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So far this season, the parade at the point has been a mish-mash of forgettable experiments, has-beens and never-will-be's who don't bring the total point guard package to the floor. Daniel Gibson was enough of a flop at the outset of the season that he welcomed a return to his bench role. Larry Hughes, who has manned the point during the Cavs' most successful periods the past two seasons, is a shooting guard playing out of position, and never lets anyone forget it. Eric Snow, who saw his first action in seemingly eons against Seattle on Thursday night, is well past his prime and is probably more of an assistant coach than a serviceable player at this point. Owed more than \$7 million next year, he's one expensive assistant coach.

Damon Jones is having his best season as a Cav, but at the end of the day, he's an undersized combo guard who brings nothing to the table when his shot isn't falling.

The Cavs need a point guard who can run an offense, minimize turnovers, make the right pass, penetrate and -- most importantly, I would argue -- consistently hit open jumpers. And -- I forgot this is Mike Brown's world -- he needs to take pride in playing defense.

The Cavs' obvious need for a point guard has connected them to just about any floor general who has been even remotely rumored to be on the trading block. As the deadline approaches, let's take a look at some notable and less-notable point men who might be coming to the Cavs in the next month, and a percentage

chance of whether a trade to the Cavs could happen.

(All statistics are as of Saturday afternoon.)

### **Jason Kidd, New Jersey Nets**

He's the guy everyone wants, [especially LeBron James](#). LeBron and Kidd became fast friends playing for Team USA last summer, and reportedly spent time earlier this season text-messaging each other about how great it would be to hook up in Cleveland. The Kidd-to-Cleveland rumors picked up a head of steam last week when Kidd asked to be traded by the Nets.

The Mavericks, Lakers, Nuggets and Cavs were all rumored to have interest. The Lakers likely dropped out after acquiring Pau Gasol from Memphis on Friday, but they might have not been a serious candidate anyway.

The price for Kidd would be high, both in money and prospects. As the most important player on New Jersey's roster, GM Rod Thorn would be signaling in a rebuilding phase by trading Kidd for anything less than another elite point guard, so the team that acquires Kidd would have to pay the Nets richly with some combination of promising young players, draft picks and expiring contracts.

To that end, the Cavs can't trade a first-round pick prior to their 2009 pick, their largest expiring deal is Ira Newble's, at about \$3.4 million, and their most promising young players are Gibson and Anderson Varejao. Gibson is the Cavs' only good outside shooter, so moving him would present a substantial risk.

Varejao can't be dealt until the summer.

In short: The likelihood of Kidd getting moved at all is slim. The likelihood of Kidd getting moved to the Cavs is a microscopic sliver of slim.

### **Kidd to Cavs: 2 percent**

### **Mike Bibby, Sacramento Kings**

Before the idea of Jason Kidd in a Cavs uniform was even a glimmer in your eye, Danny Ferry was working hard on acquiring Bibby. Three times in a little over a year, Ferry has reportedly entered serious discussions with the Kings about Bibby. Three times, nothing happened.

Now, there is a question of whether a trade should happen at all. Bibby's injury history has gotten a lot longer in recent years, and this season, he didn't take the floor until January 16, thanks to November surgery to repair a torn thumb ligament.

Bibby is signed for one more year. He'll make \$13.5 million this year and will turn 30 in May. Thirty is a dangerous age for guards. It can signify the beginning of a rapid decline in athleticism, and Bibby, at 6'-2" and 190 pounds, doesn't have Kidd-type size to compensate for slowing a step on the floor.

On the plus side, Bibby is reversing the downward statistical trends of recent years. He is shooting 42.3 percent from the floor in the several weeks he has

been active so far this year, up from 40.4 percent last year. His three-point shooting has gone way up to 46.9 percent from 36 percent last year. His points per game are down to 13.9 from 17.1 last year, largely because he's attempting an average of two fewer shots per game. He has started five of eight games and is averaging 31.6 minutes per game entering Saturday.

In the all-important assist category, Bibby is averaging 4.6 per game so far, a tick below his 4.7 last year and well below his career average of 6.2 per game. His assists have been trending downward since averaging 6.8 per game in the '04-'05 season.

Bibby is probably the best fit for the Cavs among available point guards, which is why Ferry has been pursuing him with such persistence. But Bibby comes with a huge caveat: He's probably hit the downhill side of his career, he's been having trouble staying healthy, and he's due to make a lot of money between now and the summer of 2009. All of that, combined with the Kings' historically-high asking price, is working against a deal getting done.

### **Bibby to Cavs: 10 percent**

### **Luke Ridnour, Earl Watson or Delonte West, Seattle SuperSonics**

Thursday's game in Seattle certainly played out like a showcase game. With LeBron on the bench in street clothes, Mike Brown emptied out his bench early and often, playing the likes of Shannon Brown, Eric Snow and Dwayne Jones. Mike Brown might have been searching for a rotation that worked, but it sure looked like the Cavs wanted to display their wares to Sonics management.

When it comes to point guards, the Sonics have what the Cavs want: a surplus. Earl Watson has been a starter for the Sonics, averaging 8.2 points and 6.4 assists per game. In lieu of an elite guard like Kidd or Bibby, Watson would probably be Mike Brown's ideal choice because he likes to play defense. He's a kind of younger version of Eric Snow, but with surprisingly adequate offensive numbers. Despite his pedestrian PPG average, he's shooting a respectable 40 percent from the floor and 35 percent from beyond the arc.

If the Cavs had a couple of good scorers flanking LeBron, Watson would be an ideal pickup. But it's questionable how he'd look when relied upon to provide even more offense.

Ridnour has taken a major step back this year. He has been hampered by a hamstring injury, lost his starting spot and has taken just 20 three-pointers all season, making four. Plus, he's known as a sieve on defense.

Unless Ferry thinks a change of scenery would help the lifetime Pacific Northwesterner, I doubt he's going to want to take on a guy who has regreased mightily, is owed the balance of \$6.5 million this year, and is signed for two more years.

West went westward from Boston in the Ray Allen trade that helped jumpstart the Celtics' revival. Really, he's another combo guard, but far more athletic than anyone the Cavs currently have, so there is reason to believe he could run the point competently.

His field goal percentage (39.5) and three-point percentage (35.6) are down from his career averages, but he is still averaging 3.3 assists per game in about 20 minutes a night. If he could average 6.6 assists in 40 minutes a night, those are solid numbers.

West has been a starter in the past, and there is reason to believe he'd put up better numbers with more playing time.

**Watson to Cavs: 30 percent; Ridnour to Cavs: 0.001 percent; West to Cavs: 25 percent**

### **Jason Williams, Miami Heat**

The man they call White Chocolate is a highly-underrated trade prospect for the Cavs. In the walk year of his contract with a Heat team that has been a major disappointment, his trade potential is high. He is averaging nine points and five assists in 31.2 minutes per game, and has recently started to ramp up his production. Williams has started 32 games for the Heat this season.

Williams isn't a great shooter or passer production-wise, but he is an experienced player who helped turn the Kings into a perennial playoff contender in the late '90s, and helped the Heat win a title two years ago. His time in Memphis, where he was coached by old-school Hubie Brown, helped turn him from a poor Pistol Pete impersonator to at least a semi-mature veteran.

Williams likely wouldn't be more than a stopgap in Cleveland, but if he can be had on the cheap and produce enough offense to get the Cavs back to June basketball, he might be worth acquiring. But there is no indication that Ferry is looking to Miami for help at this point.

**Williams to Cavs: 5 percent**

### **Jarrett Jack, Portland Trail Blazers**

Jack's name has come up in connection with both the Cavs and a possible three-way deal that would send Jason Kidd to Dallas. But at this point, it's hard to believe the Blazers, who are having a season far better than anyone anticipated, would mess with their roster unless they thought they could improve it in a big way.

Jack is an important part of Portland's bench, he's signed on the cheap, and it's hard to see what the Cavs could offer the Blazers to entice them to part with Jack. A three-way trade is probably not worth broaching to get a player like Jack and his nine points and three assists per game.

I'm going to assume that a Jarrett Jack isn't going to end up in a Cavs uniform

anytime soon.

**Jack to Cavs: 3 percent**