

J.J. Hickson: Do the Cavaliers Already Have What They're Looking For?

Written by {ga=jdclevelandfan}

Friday, February 05 2010 12:00 AM -



This just in:

I don't want to trade J.J. Hickson.

Not for Andre Iguodala . . . not for Amar'e Stoudemire . . . definitely not for Troy Murphy . . . and you know, not even for Antawn Jamison. (Although the Jamison part is a fairly new development.)

Let's be real here, there's a snowball's chance that any of those players will be available to Danny Ferry for *nothing*. Regardless of whatever rumors you hear. They just won't be. It makes no sense. [We explored this fact before, [here](#) .]

Teams are not going to give us their star - one of their big box-office draws (with the highly questionable inclusion of Murphy) - just for cap relief this summer . . . and they're not going to then turn around and do us *another* favor and buy-out Zydrunas Ilgauskas, just because we need him to come back. For *nothing*.

They all want a young player in return for helping us out like that, and Darnell Jackson isn't going to do the trick.

They want J.J. Hickson, who's by far the most exciting young, potential-bleeding player on Cleveland's roster. He's someone who probably isn't that far away from becoming the next big

J.J. Hickson: Do the Cavaliers Already Have What They're Looking For?

Written by {ga=jdclevelandfan}

Friday, February 05 2010 12:00 AM -

frontcourt star.

I know. You can easily argue that all four of those players (with the highly questionable inclusion of Murphy) are better than J.J. Hickson. Sure they are. Right now.

You can easily argue that a championship *this* year is the thing that will make the biggest statement to LeBron James heading into the hyped Summer of 2010. Yup. Right now.

You can easily argue that one of those "superstar" players (without the inclusion of Murphy) will make all the NBA pundits finally cave in and name the Cleveland Cavaliers their favorite to win the Title. They'll be tripping over themselves. Right now.

And you can easily argue that even if there was a way we could keep him, Stoudemire and Jamison would be significant improvements over J.J. in the frontcourt . . . and would render him unnecessary. Right now. That's *right* now.

So, there are four arguments /rationalizations / justifications / excuses that you could make for trading J.J. Hickson before the deadline, as a way of bringing in a star for Z's expiring contract . . . and with a wink and a nod, having him be bought out so that he could return to the Cavs.

And there are surely more.

But take a second and think about this: Why would we?

I don't care how familiar those names are to you. Amar'e Stoudemire! Andre Iguodala! Antawn Jamison! Troy . . . well, at least there's those first three.

Just because those players are stars on their current teams . . . which by the way . . . aren't

J.J. Hickson: Do the Cavaliers Already Have What They're Looking For?

Written by {ga=jdclevelandfan}

Friday, February 05 2010 12:00 AM -

quite playing at the level the Cavaliers are right now, that doesn't mean we need to import them just for the hell of it.

Obviously, if you *can* get one of these players for nothing . . . by all means! None of them are a real threat to *not* fit to the point where the Cavs all start recalling their favorite Larry Hughes memories.

But that's highly unlikely. For example, let's take Jamison, my personal choice of the 3 1/2 rumored names listed above. (Sorry Troy.)

Would I trade for Jamison for nothing? Yes. Would I trade for Jamison for Z and the Wizards' choice of trade picks, with a comfortable feeling that Z could return? Yes. Would I trade Z blindly for Jamison? Ooooh. I don't know. Would I trade for Jamison for Z and Hickson? No.

The Wizards, in my opinion, are the team most likely to trade their star for nothing. That being said, here are the percentages, in my opinion, that each of these deals *is* on the table.

- Jamison for nothing (Z with an understood buyout): 0.1%
- Jamison for Z (with an understood buyout), draft picks and/or non-rotation* players: 0.9%
- Jamison for Z (with no understood buyout), draft picks and/or non-rotation* players: 5%
- Jamison for Z (with a maybe** buyout) and J.J. Hickson: 94%

* = Danny Green, Jawad Williams, and Darnell Jackson (probably in that order)

** = No understood buyout. These are the Washington Wizards. They hate us. They may end up buying him out, especially if the Cavs include cash in the deal to do so . . . but they're not going to give us any guarantees ahead of time. (If you think it's just business, and the Wizards organization *wouldn't* enjoy the opportunity to screw the Cavs, then DeShawn Stevenson has some hype he'd like to sell you.)

J.J. Hickson: Do the Cavaliers Already Have What They're Looking For?

Written by {ga=jdclevelandfan}

Friday, February 05 2010 12:00 AM -

There's the saying "you don't get anything for free." Well, sometimes you do . . . in fact, I just got a free drink at my regular coffee joint earlier this week . . . but it's going to come out of nowhere. You certainly can't expect it to happen.

OK, so we're at a familiar base: If the Cavs are making a trade . . . they're trading J.J. Hickson.

Why *shouldn't* they pull the trigger?

As an entry point, I'm going to require that you've watched at least two-thirds of the games this season. Because if you've seen him play enough, you have to *at least* be marginally wary of trading him. The kid is going to be good . . . and there's a chance he could be a star . . . and he isn't that far away.

Even when J.J. has been off his game, he's shown some sweet, creative post moves . . . he's shown that he's a tough player, who's willing to put a body on any player in the post . . . and he's shown that he's a high-energy player, with some major hops, who can be a handful at both ends of the floor.

And when he's *on* his game, he looks just as good, if not better, than the players we're apparently considering trading him for. He's definitely not consistent enough, even play-to-play, to be anywhere near as good as they are now overall . . . but those holes in his game are soon going to be turning into seams, and those seams are going to be closing up. For real, watch him play.

He had a strong start when he was moved into the starting lineup in November. December was up and down for him, but he's really come on in 2010. In his last 10 games, he's averaging 9.1 points (on 54.5% shooting) with 6.7 rebounds (1.4 offensive / 5.3 defensive) and he's shooting 79.2% from the line.

In the home game against the Lakers, he had 11 points and 14 rebounds. Against Minnesota last week, he had 23 points and eight rebounds. In Tuesday's game against Memphis, he had 15 points, eight rebounds and two steals. Last night against Miami, he had 12 points, five

J.J. Hickson: Do the Cavaliers Already Have What They're Looking For?

Written by {ga=jdclevelandfan}

Friday, February 05 2010 12:00 AM -

rebounds and two blocks.

Two of those points came in a serious fast break dunk on Dwyane Wade. Later in the game, Wade tried to return the favor, and J.J. rejected him, hard, for his second block. These are big plays, people.

He's had eight games scoring 15+. The Cavs are 8-0 in those games. He's had 13 games with 10+ points. The Cavs are 13-0 in those. His shooting percentage, 54.3%, is second on the team (to Shaq).

All that being said, I do realize some people are going to disagree with me on this . . . and I'll admit, assuming we have Z back, Jamison and Stoudemire would both make our team better this year than we'd be with J.J. Troy Murphy, again, I'm sorry.

The issue is the future.

Jamison will be 34 this year, and has two years left on his deal. Stoudemire would have to agree to a new contract with the Cavs. We don't want to trade J.J. for a few-month rental that we may not even need. Even if he does, he doesn't exactly seem like someone who'd be a guaranteed fit with the fun, laid-back, team before individual atmosphere that LeBron enjoys here in Cleveland.

And naturally, with Stoudemire, any long term contract would be a risk considering his two serious eye injuries . . . retina and iris . . . and two serious knee injuries. He had arthroscopic surgery on his right knee, and the dreaded microfracture surgery on his left knee.

(I can't see Ferry going more than two years guaranteed. Think Andre's ego would want to leave his \$17.7 million player option in Phoenix for that? *Someone* would be willing to offer him more.)

J.J. Hickson: Do the Cavaliers Already Have What They're Looking For?

Written by {ga=jdclevelandfan}

Friday, February 05 2010 12:00 AM -

Iguodala, of the three, could be the best option for a running mate for LeBron for years to come. But you don't trade a big man to get him. That would leave us extremely thin, offensively, at the forward spot for *this* year (and that's even if Leon Powe can come back at 110% health).

And for the years ahead, the Cavs would have to stick with Shaq and Z . . . because with Iguodala's contract (and a reasonable amounts to resign Shaw and Z) . . . the Cavs aren't going to have any way of bringing in another player who makes more than the Mid-Level Exception for years to come.

(Thank you for not mentioning the Samuel Dalembert "option.")

So look at this way: The Cavs are 40-11 . . . on the same pace as they were last season. Our team is much better on and off paper this year. It's deep, it's flexible, and its absolutely stacked with talent.

The Cavs have a 10-game winning streak, and have won eight of those without Mo Williams (and seven without Mo and Delonte, and one of those without Mo, Delonte and a right Boobie.)

We don't *need* to make a trade. We'll feverishly explore all our options, we'll check and recheck the availability of every player in the league, and we'll absolutely move to bring in an upgrade in talent . . . if, by chance, there ends up being some available for nothing or next to nothing.

But we're shouldn't force it . . . and we definitely shouldn't trade J.J. for anything short of someone else's young burgeoning big man. And honestly, I can't think of one that could be available that I'd want to make that switch for.

As it stands, we have the best team in the NBA . . . we have two starters coming off the injured list soon . . . we have another intriguing piece in Powe that'll be joining the team after the All-Star break . . . and we have J.J. Hickson to look forward to watching blossom as a Cavalier for years to come, alongside LeBron James.

Did you see them running the break together in the second quarter against Miami? LeBron at

J.J. Hickson: Do the Cavaliers Already Have What They're Looking For?

Written by {ga=jdclevelandfan}

Friday, February 05 2010 12:00 AM -

6'8" lifting that perfect alley-oop up to a speeding Hickson at 6'9", who finished with a seismic throw-down.

I know, If the Cavs don't make significant trade, they can't guarantee that they'll make the Finals . . . let alone win it all. But then again, a trade (for *anyone*) won't guarantee that either. If LeBron is looking for a "future" to sign with this offseason . . . Cleveland has one. Right now.