



The newest buzzword that sports fans love to use is "loyalty." It is a loaded word. Need proof of it? Here is exhibit [A](#) and exhibit [B](#). Using the phrase "loyalty" in an attempt to argue that athletes should spend their career playing for teams whose ceiling is limited pulls at the heartstrings. Sometimes the idea of losing a great player hurts, so it is easier to guilt them into staying or questioning their character when they leave.

Dwight Howard should leave the Orlando Magic. He has not been a perfect employee. Howard has been nothing but a headache for the team for the past few years and it all came to a boil this past season when he and teammate Jameer Nelson reportedly had to be separated because they almost came to blows on at least one occasion. Dwight Howard has not handled his situation very well for the Magic, but the his team has also failed him. Howard and the Magic is a classic case of one or two bad personnel decisions and countless bad and expensive roster moves that were made in response. Drafting someone 11th overall in 2005 who has yet to play for your team sets off a chain reaction that is akin to trying to go up an escalator that is moving downward. You may be able to pull it off, but before you know it you just handed out \$118 million dollars to a one-dimensional player.

The Magic spent a lot of money and made a lot of moves to try and build a winner around Dwight Howard and it simply did not work. This leaves us at where we are currently. Dwight Howard is leaving the Magic as soon as he can. The Magic have fired general manager Otis Smith and head coach Stan Van Gundy. They replaced Smith with a Rob Hennigan, a 30 year old with ties to the San Antonio Spurs and Oklahoma City Thunder. Van Gundy has yet to be replaced. The Magic are a rebuilding team and are looking to get as much as they can for Dwight Howard.

These kinds of trades are difficult. You want to get assets, but not too many. Additionally, the

disgruntled star player probably has one team that they want to go to which further complicates matters because it excessively decreases the value of said player. If Dwight Howard will only sign a long-term extension with the Brooklyn Nets, why would the Houston Rockets give up many assets to rent him for a season? The key for rebuilding a team like the Magic is to get good draft picks and young players. The Denver Nuggets appeared to have done very well when they traded Carmelo Anthony, but they are now a good and not great team without the ability to sign any impactful free agents and without any high draft picks.

The trade that would have sent Dwight Howard to Brooklyn, Kris Humphries to Cleveland, MarShon Brooks to the Clippers and Brook Lopez to the Magic is seemingly dead. The fact that this trade became one between four teams, over ten players, 4 first round draft picks, agent Dan Fegan and \$3 million is what killed the trade. This leaves Dwight Howard and the Magic at an impasse and it will be interesting to see what happens in the short future. One thing is clear: Dwight Howard's time with the Magic is almost over. The Cavs have earned themselves a [reputation](#) as being difficult to deal with in trades, but that sure beats paying Kris Humphries big money for four years in exchange for a pick late in the first round.

Loyalty is dead in sports. I am not sure it has even been a thing in the modern era. Hell, even Michael Jordan played for the Washington Wizards and has his number retired in Miami. The thing about players being loyal to their team is that if we expect it from them, the least we can do is offer it to the players. You can't read a blog post, turn on the radio or have a conversation with a Cavs fan without the topic of Anderson Varejao and his trade value coming up. Varejao has never played for any other NBA team besides the Cleveland Cavaliers. He has played hard and slowly but surely worked his way up from a throw-in on a trade that was considered a consolation prize for losing Carlos Boozer, to an energy bench guy, to a sometimes starter, to a solid big man with a bad contract and finally to a double-double machine with one of the best contracts in the NBA. And yet, everybody wants to have him traded because he will probably be a liability to the team once they are ready to contend because his intangibles cost the Cavs ping-pong balls.

Although I tend to agree that Chris Grant should really consider trading Varejao for the aforementioned reasons, I think it is time that we tone down the talk of loyalty and stop holding the players to standards that we do not offer them ourselves. Quite simply, the Cavs, Magic and Nuggets of the world should be more concerned with surrounding their star player with great situations so staying loyal is the only option that makes sense.