



The Cavs are in the middle of a very long and tedious process of rebuilding the team in wake of the departure of LeBron James. The team has been collecting assets big and small. This past draft has shown that the Cavs can use late draft picks to move up and select what they hope is an impact player in Tyler Zeller. This is exactly why Chris Grant traded DJ Kennedy to the Memphis Grizzlies for Jeremy Pargo and a second round pick. Odds are heavily in favor of the pick not resulting in a rotation player for the Cavs, but every little asset helps the process move along further.

Anderson Varejao is the by far the best asset that the Cavs have. His age and his injury history are the reasons that it is projected by many that he will not finish his career in Cleveland. Varejao is a very productive big man who can either be a spark off the bench or start, makes a very reasonable salary and is the type of player that every single team in the NBA would love to have. It does not make sense to trade Varejao despite what a great asset he is and how his time with the team is winding down.

The biggest factor is his contract. Varejao is set to make approximately \$27 million in the last

three years of his current deal with the Cavs. The last year and \$9.7 million are not fully guaranteed. In other words, the Cavs can pay Varejao an average of \$9 million in the next three years if they choose to. If Varejao's career takes a turn for the worse and they choose to not retain him in 2014-2015, they can keep him for the next two seasons at an average of \$8.7 million per year. \$27 million may sound like a lot for a player who is not likely to be named to an all star team, but the going rate for big men is much higher than what he currently makes. What was once [considered](#) a bad [contract](#) in [2009](#) is ironically currently one of the better values in the entire NBA. To put it in perspective, DeSagana Diop and Tyrus Thomas are both going to be paid \$15.4 million next season. Brendan Haywood was set to make \$8.4 million in Dallas before the team used the amnesty provision on him. Charlie Villanueva is going to make \$8 million in Detroit. The Golden State Warriors are going to pay Andris Biedrins \$9 million in 2012-2013.

Every player mentioned is vastly overpaid and disappointing. It is more interesting to look at productive players and their current contracts. The Washington Wizards owe Nenê \$13 million annually for the following four years. Nenê is a very good player for the Wizards, but not a star by any stretch of the imagination. Andrea Bargnani earns anywhere between \$10 million and \$11.5 million from the Raptors for the following three years. Bargnani is an effective scorer but lacks the know-how to be an elite rebounder. In addition, he possesses more skills of a small forward than he does a center in his 7 foot frame. Thaddeus Young of the Philadelphia 76ers is going to make \$8 million. Young and Varejao make interesting players to compare due to the nature of their similar contracts and scoring. They are by no means similar players across the board, but there are parallels to be drawn. When you look at their comparisons courtesy of [Basketball-Reference.com](#)

, you see that they both scored similar points per game at an almost identical efficiency, but the real value comes in the rebounding. Varejao pulled down

[20.8](#)

% of available rebounds for the Cavs in 2011-2012 compared to the

[10.3](#)

% that Young did for Philadelphia last year. Both of these players make about the same amount of money except one is far superior at rebounding.

Kyrie Irving is the cornerstone of the franchise and he appears to have very good chemistry with Varejao. Irving [assisted](#) 28 times to him in the course of the season. This may not appear to be that many, but it was the fourth highest to any single player on the team and Varejao only played in 25 of a possible 66 games. The fact that he can play the pick and roll very well and can occasionally convert on a pick-and-pop makes him a good teammate for Irving.

The problem with trading Varejao does not only stem from needing to reproduce his production at a similar contract. Varejao brings many intangibles to the table. Although he is not a leader in the traditional sense, he plays hard on every single possession and that is infectious. His intangibles do not start and stop with diving for loose balls. Varejao draws offensive fouls, tips balls away from his man, boxes out very well, defends guards on the perimeter at a high level among other little things that helps his teams win. One aspect of his game that is underrated is how he oftentimes is in [position](#) to get an offensive rebound. It doesn't matter if it appears as if the ball will go through the basket. Varejao can be found jumping towards the basket and positioning himself for the rebound. He operates under the assumption that every shot will be a miss and is very good at defending the shooter and making a run for the rebound as well.

As shown in the graph below, Anderson Varejao's contract is very good when compared to other big men across the NBA. The Cavs would have to replace his production if they were to trade Varejao and that is going to prove to be difficult. This is partially due to how unique of a player he is and because the salary of big men has increased astronomically since the Cavs extended Varejao in the summer of 2009. The best deal that the Cavs could hope to make is for a very good lottery pick and Varejao is not the kind of player that lottery teams are looking to obtain. The problem lies in the fact that his services would be best on a contender who is looking for a veteran big man to come off the bench or start. Contenders tend to not have lottery picks, thus rendering a Varejao trade difficult to pull off.

Player

Age	2012-2013 Salary	Full Value of Remaining Contract	2011-2012 Points Per Game
Josh Smith	26	\$13.2 million	20.2
Al Horford	26	\$12.0 million	18.0
Brook Lopez	24	\$13.7 million	16.8

## Cleveland Cavaliers Basketball

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Kris Humphries	27	\$12.0 million	\$24.0 million
Tyrus Thomas	25	\$8.0 million	\$26.1 million
DeSagana Diop	30	\$7.4 million	\$7.4 million
Carlos Boozer	30	\$15.0 million	\$47.1 million
Joakim Noah	27	\$11.3 million	\$48.0 million
Shawn Marion	34	\$8.4 million	\$17.2 million
Al Harrington	32	\$6.7 million	\$21.5 million
Charlie Villanueva	27	\$8.0 million	\$16.7 million
Jason Maxiell	29	\$5.0 million	\$5.0 million
Andrew Bogut	27	\$13.0 million	\$27.0 million

David Lee	29	\$12.7 million	\$57.1 million
Andris Biedrins	26	\$9.0 million	\$9.0 million
David West	31	\$10.0 million	\$10.0 million
DeAndre Jordan	24	\$10.5 million	\$33.0 million
Pau Gasol	32	\$19.0 million	\$38.2 million
Andrew Bynum	24	\$16.1 million	\$16.1 million
Zach Randolph	31	\$16.5 million	\$50.8 million
Marc Gasol	27	\$13.9 million	\$44.6 million
Marreese Speights	24	\$4.5 million	\$9.0 million

Chris Bosh	28	\$17.5 million	\$79.3 million
Udonis Haslem	32	\$4.0 million	\$13.0 million
Joel Anthony	29	\$3.8 million	\$11.4 million
Drew Gooden	30	\$6.7 million	\$20.0 million
Ersan Ilyasova	25	\$8.0 million	\$40.0 million
Kevin Love	23	\$12.9 million	\$57.5 million
Nene	29	\$13.0 Million	\$52.0 million
Emeka Okafor	29	\$13.5 million	\$28.0 million
Amar'e Stoudemire	29	\$20.0 million	\$65.1 million

Tyson Chandler	29	\$13.6 million	\$42.3 million
Kendrick Perkins	27	\$7.8 million	\$25.5 million
Glen Davis	26	\$6.4 million	\$19.4 million
Thaddeus Young	24	\$8.0 million	\$35.5 million
Marcin Gortat	28	\$7.3 million	\$15.0 million
Channin Frye	29	\$6.0 million	\$19.2 million
Michael Beasley	23	\$6.0 million	\$18 million
Hakim Warrick	30	\$4.0 million	\$8.0 million
Andrea Bargnani	26	\$10.0 million	\$32.3 million

Amir Johnson	25	\$6.0 million	\$19.6 million
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Paul Millsap	27	\$8.6 million	\$8.6 million
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Andray Blatche	25	\$7.1 Million	\$23.4 million
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Name	Age	2012-2013 Salary	Full Value of Remainder
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2011-2012 Total Rebound Rate

Anderson Varejao	29	\$8.4 million	\$27.1
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Trading Anderson Varejao should not be taken off the table. The Cavs should make any move if the right deal comes along. There are a plethora of cons to keeping him on the payroll. He does not have that many years left where he can play at an elite level. In addition, he is already slowing down a bit when he gets caught on switches and is forced to guard wing players. The other problem is that the Cavs probably win too much when he is active. The team needs to not worry about veteran players at this point and would be best to take an approach of building through the draft. A healthy season of Anderson Varejao may hurt their lottery odds significantly. Varejao also does have a long injury history and cannot be counted on to play a full season. Despite all of these negative consequences of not trading Varejao, keeping him on the team probably makes the most sense. He is a very valuable player who can play multiple positions, is an elite rebounder and brings many intangibles to the table.