

PALADINS BLOG

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Figuring Out The Difference Between Scouting For The NBA And Euroleague

Trying to figure out the difference between what NBA scouts want and what European or Euroleague GMs want, is quite big and different. There are many different leagues with different styles in Europe and the NBA is just one league. And while the Euroleague is one league, there's ten different countries represented in the Euroleague this season and teams have to worry about winning their domestic league and competing in the Euroleague, so sometimes that can be like planning for two separate things.

Potential vs. Production



Source: NBA (2014)

The biggest difference between what an NBA team is looking for and what an Euroleague team is looking for is potential vs. production. Especially when talking about the NBA Draft, an NBA team has 3 to 4 years of the player under contract and that time is used to evaluate, if that player can be a long term contributor to the club. The NBA roster has 15 players and many also now have a D-League affiliate, so there is often no rush for the player to play soon.

In Europe it is much different. Players often sign a one year deal and need to produce immediately and if an import, they're expected to be a key player.

So with the ability to wait for an NBA team, they are looking for things like length, athleticism, and skills that can be developed. They're projecting the player out while a Euroleague team is trying to figure out the skills that the player can contribute right then.

Trend in Europe



Source: Euroleague (2015)

In Europe, a big thing in recent years is the modern undersized center. Players like Kyle HINES, Marcus SLAUGHTER, Othello HUNTER, Stephane LASME, Bryant DUNSTON and others in this mold have become the most prized centers in the Euroleague. Many of these players are around 6'8" (give an inch or two either way) and have long wingspans, good strength and are very mobile and athletic. These types of centers are able to protect the rim and switch onto most players defensively and can set a ton of screens and rim run offensively. In the NBA, they would try to turn a player of this size into a power forward and this would limit the player's strengths. So as you can see, the type of player that may be successful at a Euroleague level does not always fit the more rigid structure of NBA positions.

Bottom Line



Source: Euroleague (2015)

The NBA is more interested in the body often because it matters so much with length and athleticism with projecting a player out. In Europe, it's about where you are physically in the moment because you need to produce immediately. The NBA is such a big and athletic league, so teams often have certain profiles for each position that are much more traditional. In Europe, there are so many unique players: 6'5" centers or guards who post up or 6'10" shooters or point guards with forward height. The NBA scouting focus gets so narrowed, while in Europe you have much more freedom to fit players into different roles. But in general, scouts at all levels are looking for talent. It's just a lot tougher to fit players into the NBA game.