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No Trade, No Gain: Tyreke Evans Left Languishing with Sacramento Kings



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The [NBA](#) trade deadline passed on Thursday without the [Sacramento Kings](#) trading guard/forward Tyreke Evans, who will now remain with the team until at least the end of the season before becoming a restricted [free agent](#) on July 1.

If the Kings extend a qualifying offer, they will be able to match any offer he accepts from another team. However, if they truly want to keep him, they would have to sign him to a lucrative contract, given the offer sheet Eric Gordon signed last summer.

Evans was not given a contract extension this past offseason, a lack of commitment that does not bode well for a long-term future in Sacramento for the 2009-10 NBA Rookie of the Year.

David Aldridge of NBA.com has reported that the [Kings remain unlikely to keep Evans](#) after the season. "Evans has shown flashes in his first three seasons, but not enough to pique Sacramento's interest to give him a deal. The Kings will 'probably not' be offering an extension, a source says."

Thus, it is likely that Evans will wear a new uniform after the offseason. However, this uniform change is long overdue. It is well beyond the time for Evans and the Kings to go their separate ways after a four-year marriage.

Drawing comparisons to Magic Johnson, Evans entered the league as one of the most exciting point guard prospects in years. Built with a 6'6", 220-pound frame, he towers over smaller defenders and can bully his way into the paint for easy buckets.

Evans set the NBA ablaze during the 2009-2010 season, easily winning the Rookie of the Year Award while also putting himself in the esteemed company of LeBron James, Oscar Robertson, and Michael Jordan as the only players in league history to average more than 20 points, five rebounds, and five assists as a rookie.

Since that illustrious rookie season, though, Evans has languished in Sacramento. [Sources close to Evans have long indicated his frustration](#) with how the team has marginalized his talents. He has been given fluctuating minutes and roles, shifting between the shooting guard and small forward positions- neither of which he is comfortable playing.

As a rookie, Evans played primarily at point guard and served as a designated ball handler. In this role, he ruthlessly attacked the basket and converted high-percentage shots at the rim. He averaged over [10 interior points per game](#) as a rookie-approximately half his total scoring output-while also drawing contact inside that earned him nearly seven trips per game to free-throw line.

Since then, the Kings have asked him to play off the ball and out on the wing more than ever before, robbing him of his desire to attack the basket and forcing him to live on perimeter shooting. Indeed, Evans is averaging a career-low six shots per game at the rim this season. Compounding this issue is the fact that he rarely has the ball playing alongside several shoot-first, ball-dominating guards in Jimmer Fredette, Isiah Thomas, and Marcus Thornton.

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In light of Evans' struggles in Sacramento, one cannot help but wonder if he would have developed into a perennial All-Star as envisioned had he been drafted by a team armed with stable coaching and a better blueprint for the future. After all, he has proven that, even with limited experience, he can be a dynamic player in the NBA when allowed to play to his strengths.

There is no other point guard in the entire league that possesses Evans' lethal combination of size and ball-handling.

He boasts a wingspan exceeding 6-11, one significantly larger than those of elite point guards such as Chris Paul (6-4) and Deron Williams (6-6). This incredible size advantage explains Evans' uncanny ability to get his shot off against almost anyone; in fact, [only nine percent of his shots at the rim were blocked last year](#). His physique also awards him the ability to guard three different positions, and he does so at an elite level in one-on-one situations.

Although he lacks the explosiveness and speed of Paul, Rajon Rondo, or Derrick Rose, Evans remains a one-on-one phenom who can showcase his moves across the entire court, including his patented Euro Step that is among the league's best.

Simply put, Evans' promise on which he delivered as a rookie continues to waste away in Sacramento. His extraordinary talents have been rendered ordinary as the Kings continue to search for direction, a task made more difficult by the ongoing off-the-court mess likely culminating in a possible relocation and change of owners.

Despite three consecutive seasons of unfulfilled promise, Evans has still real value around the league, and the Kings would have been wise to capitalize on it at the trade deadline so that both parties could have taken the next steps in their respective development.

Instead, Evans will likely leave Sacramento as a restricted free agent in just a few months. It is not hard to see him blossoming in a different city, where he will be surrounded by better teammates and coaches. He remains an exceptionally gifted athlete who has the ability to lead a team, even considering his recent less than encouraging play.

Some team will unpack Evans' potential, but it is more than likely that that team will not be the Sacramento Kings. The lack of an Evans trade this February only postpones his career rebirth.

1. Avinash Kunnath. "Sacramento Kings and Tyreke Evans Could Be Nearing the End", SB Nation.
2. David Aldridge. "Most teams will shy away from giving '09 picks a big payday", NBA.com.
3. Sean Sweeney. "Attack the Rim: The NBA's 5 Best Penetrating Point Guards", Dime Magazine.
4. "Tyreke Evans", HoopData.

Published by [Daniel Lewis](#)

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