

# Blockbuster Trades Change Trajectory of NBA

BY WILL STORBECK

As the trade deadline approaches for the 2024-2025 NBA season, teams are making big moves to improve their roster for the second half of the regular season and secure a better future for their team. This season, there have been two major trades within days of each other that will completely change the trajectory of the teams involved in said trades.

On February 1st, the most shocking trade in NBA history went down. The Dallas Mavericks traded their superstar Luka Dončić to the Los Angeles Lakers. Officially, the Lakers got Luka Dončić, Maxi Kleber, and Markieff Morris; the Mavericks got Anthony Davis, Max Christie, and a 2026 1st round draft pick.

This is the worst possible thing that the Mavericks could possibly do for their future. Luka Dončić has been a top 5 player in the league for the past couple seasons, averaging over 30 points for the last 3 seasons. Just last year, Dončić led the Mavericks to an NBA Finals appearance for the first time in 13 years. He has accomplished all these things and is still only 25 years old, which is young in NBA terms. This trade is arguably the dumbest trade an organization has made in NBA history.

On the other hand, the Mavericks gained Anthony Davis in the trade. Davis is an excellent scorer and interior defender; however, he is 31 years old (which means he is past his prime) and has struggled with injuries the past few seasons. The Mavs did get a valuable player, but it was at the cost of their entire future.

The Lakers are the ones who benefited greatly from this trade. They got themselves a top 3 offensive player

in the league that is young and has playoff experience. The Lakers now have a superstar that can replace LeBron as the face of the team when he retires.

Another blockbuster trade happened in the league right before the trade deadline. Jimmy Butler, the Miami Heat's superstar was traded to the Golden State Warriors in a large multi-team trade. The Warriors biggest loss from the trade was Andrew Wiggins, who is a great wing player that will definitely help out the Heat.

Jimmy Butler led the Heat to two Finals appearances in the last 4 years. His recent playoff performances have been remarkable, and he will fit very well in Golden State's system. Now, with seasoned NBA vets like Steph Curry and Jimmy Butler, the Warriors also have a chance of being a threat in the west.

In addition to these two huge trades, there was a third one that will also cause substantial changes in the NBA. The Sacramento Kings' star point guard, De'Aaron Fox was traded to the Spurs in a large three-team trade between the Bulls, the Kings, and the Spurs. The Kings picked up the Chicago Bulls' best player, Zach LaVine, from the trade, and they lost their best wing player, Kevin Huerter. This was a decent trade for the Kings, but the team that really benefitted from it was the San Antonio Spurs.

The Spurs already have the most promising player of the last decade, Victor Wembanyama. His talent and ability mixed with De'Aaron Fox's craftiness and intelligence give the Spurs a very bright future.

This year's trade deadline is already being consid-

ered the craziest and most impactful trade deadline in NBA history. There have been multiple blockbuster trades that will have major effects on the current standings as well as the future of the league as a whole.

With viewership and ratings declining, the NBA needed something that would get fans interested. That is what this year's trades have done. They have shifted around the teams' most prominent superstars, and NBA fans cannot wait to see how the rest of this season will play out.



Graphic by Will Storbeck

# Returning to the Pitch: Esquivel '19 Comes Back to Coach JV Soccer

BY BECKETT BELLER

The Mount's junior varsity soccer team welcomes back a familiar face this season. The new JV coach, Sebastian Esquivel '19, an alumnus of the school, is returning to the program after a two-year intermission. His journey from a player to a coach has come full circle, and he is ready to make an impact on the future generation of Mount Michael soccer players.

Reflecting on his time as a student-athlete, Esquivel fondly remembers his experience playing for the Knights. "I enjoyed playing soccer at Mount Michael. Although we never made it to the state tournament, the soccer program here gave me lifelong friendships with people I still play soccer with today." His personal connection to the soccer program makes his return as a coach even more meaningful.

Esquivel's coaching journey first began in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic when he took up coaching at local youth soccer clubs. This eventually led to his first stint as the JV coach at Mount Michael. However, Esquivel had to step away after just two years of coaching. Now, after another two years, he is back and ready to help shape the program once again. "I am very grateful to have the opportunity to return and coach here," Esquivel said.

Coming back as a coach as a former player brings a sense of both pride and responsibility. "It is a great honor to return to the team as a coach after having been a former player at Mount Michael. Coaching allows me to give back to the school and program that shaped my high school experience," Esquivel shared. His aim is to instill in his players the same sense of camaraderie and commitment that he experienced as an athlete.

However, coaching a JV team comes with its challenges. The largest obstacle, Esquivel admits, is managing the technical ability of players. Luckily, he has Jurgen Beller '22, another alumnus who similarly returned to lead the JV soccer team, to help overcome this obstacle. "Coach Jurgen and I plan to tackle this challenge by focusing on the fundamentals while progressively preparing the team to be match-ready." This approach will ensure that all players, regardless of skill level, will develop throughout the season.

His goals for the season emphasize player development and competitiveness. "We want to see players improve throughout the season and be competitive in all our matches. By the end of the season, we hope to see noticeable improvement across the team compared to the first day of tryouts." For Esquivel, success is not measured in the number of wins, but in the progress and growth of the players.

Drawing from his own soccer career, he offers valuable advice to his players. "The advice I would give to current players is to build trust amongst your teammates. The season is short and can be unforgiving due to the number of games and practices, so you need to lean on each other to achieve success as a team."

For Esquivel, the most rewarding part of the job is witnessing the impact he has on his players. "The most rewarding part of coaching is seeing the players' improvement throughout the season and seeing the positive impact I have in their lives. It is an amazing feeling to be greeted by former players after I have finished coaching them."

With a deep appreciation for the program and a commitment to player development, the new JV coach is set to make an impact on the Mount's soccer team. His journey from player to coach serves as an inspiration to his players, reminding them that soccer is about more than just the game, it's about growth, friendships, and the lessons learned along the way.

Graphic by Beckett Beller



# Golf Q&A With New Head Coach Jeff Porter

BY GARRET FOGLE

**What experience do you have coaching golf, and what success have you had with coaching?**

"I've enjoyed teaching golf since 1976. Over the years, I've had the privilege of working with 15 Division I players. Beyond just golf, I focus on instilling valuable life lessons in my players—because, in the end, the biggest game they'll play is the game of life."

**What is the most important lesson you have learned throughout your years of golf?**

"The more you play golf, the more you realize that success comes from focusing on the process. A good process leads to good results, and that principle applies not only to golf but to life as well."

**What does the team's success look like for you besides wins and losses?**

"Success goes beyond the scoreboard. It's about personal and spiritual growth. I want my players to develop solid golf fundamentals, become better listeners, and grow into respectful young men."

**What's the worst excuse you have heard for a bad shot?**

"Golfers rarely take responsibility for their bad shots! I've heard it all! Blaming the wind, the grass, the people they're playing with, or even the pace of play. It's never their fault!"