

# Abundance of football injuries hurts teams

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The Clackamas Print

I am starting to wonder there will even be a Super Bowl this year, considering no team can seem to beat the plague of team injuries that surrounds the NFL this season.

We are only into week 6, but quite a few teams already have between 7 and 11 players injured.

Even the poor Seattle Seahawks can't beat the injury bug. Shaun Alexander has injured his wrist and is listed as probable to play. With their superstar injured, will the

team be able to stand up to Super Bowl contenders?

Seattle isn't the only team that is bruised. Every single team has at least one player down with an injury.

These injuries are going to hurt many teams' chances of contending for a Super Bowl ring. Coaches are having to revamp their offense or defense and, in some cases, are even throwing in the new guy. Teams are being forced to come up with a new plan in order to beat some of their opponents.

It seems like most of the injuries this season are to the lower part of players' bodies. Many players are out with

ankle, knee, toe, hamstring or groin injuries.

St. Louis is going to struggle, considering that former Oregon State University star Steven Jackson is out with a groin injury.

Baltimore has even more problems, with their starting Quarterback Steve McNair out with a back injury.

The New York Giants are going to have to trust the young Eli Manning with their fate this season, since Chad Pennington is out with an ankle injury.

It seems as though all we may be watching on Super Bowl Sunday this year is the half-time performer.



Courtesy of the Seattle Seahawks 2007

Shaun Alexander injured his wrist but is listed as probable to play.

# NBA Preseason 2007

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The Clackamas Print

The NBA season is upon us, bringing exciting, young talent and savvy veterans.

Some of those players have won teams or are entering the league for their inaugural campaign. Other players have signed with teams that are a great fit for their abilities.

The preseason gives us a sneak peak at the teams thriving toward championship stardom, while other teams are looking for that competitive edge. With that said, here are teams to watch, as well as players who could have an impact this season.

## Atlanta Hawks

The Hawks have a lot of young talent.

Rookie Al Horford, the Hawks' first-round pick out of Florida, could make an impact. He was the first guy drafted from the Florida Gators National Championship team, so he has a lot of promise.

However, the Hawks have so many forwards that their roster resembles a shaken-up soda bottle waiting to explode — though, Horford could see playing time in the center due to his fine pre-season play.

## Houston Rockets

The Rockets are expected to make the playoffs with not only their young talent, but with their two all-stars Tracy McGrady and Yao Ming.

However, they are in a similar situation as the Hawks. Instead of an overload of forwards, the Rockets have a surplus of guards — not to mention they failed to add a pure athlete to their roster, and as a result are on the decline.

## Seattle Supersonics

The Sonics have high hopes and expectations for rookie phenomenon Kevin Durant because he's the only player on the roster who is a lock to be in the starting lineup.

After losing Ray Allen (Boston) and Rashard Lewis (Orlando) to free agency, the Sonics look to be in rebuilding mode. Sure, Durant will put up big numbers, but the rest of the players' roles are in doubt.

## Memphis Grizzlies

The Grizzlies battled through injuries to their valuable players, such as Pau Gasol and Damon Stoudamire.

Now they have young, skilled point guard Mike Conley, Conley, the number-four pick in the NBA

Draft, has the prototype to be one of the purest point guards in the game. As a result, he could start and make an impact now.

This team can make the playoffs over the Golden State Warriors, and here's why:

As posted on the Warriors' Web site, the Warriors face a two-dollar-steak type of tough schedule. They play the San Antonio Spurs, then the next night against the Dallas Mavericks, Memphis Grizzlies and the New Orleans Hornets. All of those games are on the road — and just before the final month, they have the Denver Nuggets in Denver and Dallas at home.

However, on their Web site, the Grizzlies have two match-ups on their schedule with a rebuilding Minnesota Timberwolves squad that's without Kevin Garnett on their roster. The Grizzlies could surprise this season.

## Orlando Magic

The Magic have at least three shooters in Hedo Turkoglu, JJ Redick and Rashard Lewis, the latter of whom signed with the Magic in the off-season.

According to Yahoo Sports, Redick tore tissue in his foot last year while playing a pick-up game of basketball. During this preseason, Redick has been on fire, netting at least two three-pointers a game. Back in his college day at Duke, this was the norm.

With all of those shooters and a dominant big man in Dwight Howard, this is a sleeper team that could make the playoffs.

## East Playoffs

My upset pick is the New Jersey Nets over the Miami Heat because the Nets have secured their top scorer, Vince Carter, who is a beast when it comes to in-game tenacity — not to mention this lineup has Jason Kidd and fellow teammate Richard Jefferson.

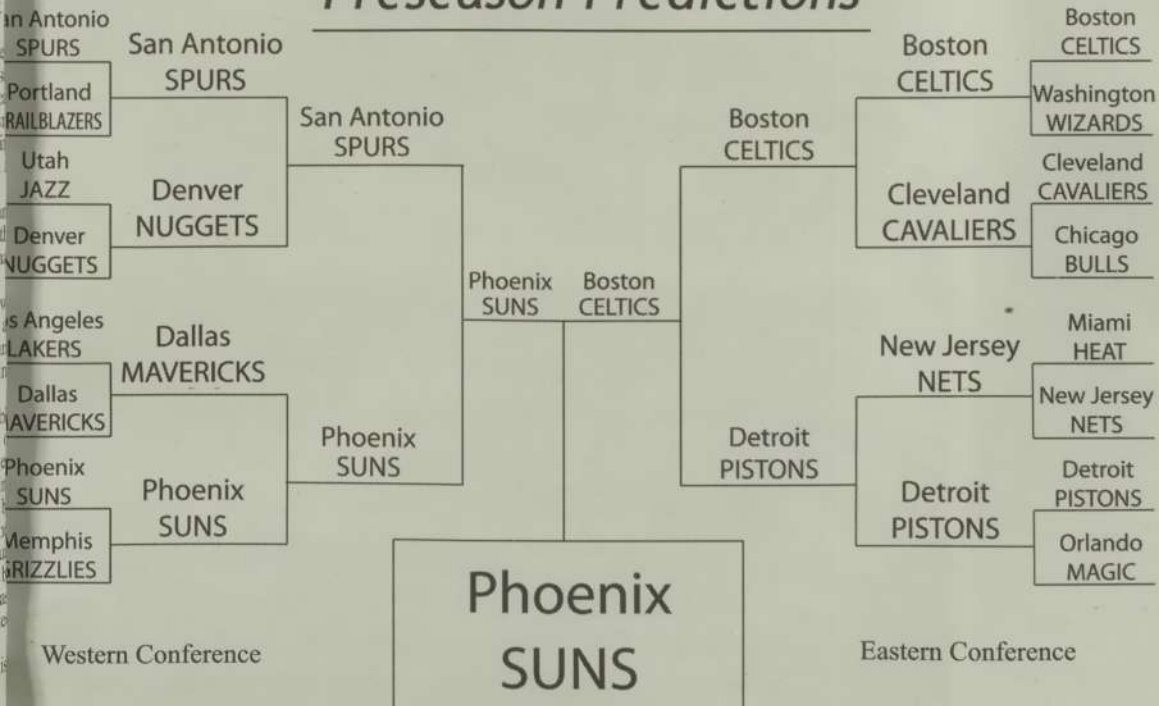
In the end, there will be a Celtics versus Pistons east final, and believe it or not, the Boston Celtics will win the series. The Celtics look really poised so far, and they now have three go-to guys in Kevin Garnett, Ray Allen and Paul Pierce.

## West Playoffs

In the west finals, there will be a meeting with the San Antonio Spurs and the Phoenix Suns. Call me crazy, but this will be the year the Phoenix Suns beat the San Antonio Spurs. We know that San Antonio has the recipe for a championship, but the Phoenix Suns had the Spurs on the ropes last year in the playoffs.

As the Suns meet the Celtics in the finals, they have finally found their niche in 2008. The sun won't set this time as the Suns will finally rise, and for the rest of us, it's time to wake up.

# Preseason Predictions



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NFL is supposed to stand for National Football League, not the No Fun League.

In 2006, the NFL cracked down on touchdown celebrations by amending rules to include an automatic 15-yard penalty for any dance in which a player leaves his feet or uses a prop.

Terrell Owens is probably the most notorious for these distasteful touchdown dances.

In 2002, when playing against the Seahawks, Owens removed a sharpie from his sock and proceeded to sign the ball before handing it to his financial adviser sitting near the end zone. In 2004, when playing against the Ravens, he mocked the dance of linebacker Ray Lewis, a five-time Pro-Bowl participant and respected player.

More recently, in light of the Patriots' videotaping scandal, Owens held the ball like an old-fashioned wind-up video camera and "taped" the Dolphins sidelines.

Owens needs to learn the difference between being creative and just plain offensive.

Another player who decided to step over the line of what is acceptable celebration is Falcons wide receiver Joe Horn. After a touchdown in 2003 against the New York Giants, Horn pulled a cell phone from the padding of the goalpost where he had hidden it earlier and called his family. He was immediately given a 15-yard penalty and a \$30,000 fine.

Chad Johnson, on the other hand, is a true revolutionary when it comes to touchdown dances. The Bengals wide receiver started the creative dances in 2005 when he did an interpretation of river dancing after scoring a touchdown.

In maybe the best touchdown celebration I have ever heard of, Johnson pretended to propose to a Bengals cheerleader after scoring a touchdown, and she accepted the mock proposal.

After being fined by the NFL several weeks in a row, Johnson celebrated his next touchdown by holding up a sign that read "Dear NFL, please don't fine me again!!!"

Ironically, he was fined again.

He has also performed CPR on the ball, the chicken dance and an imitation of Tiger Woods that ended up costing him \$5,000 in fines.

I understand that football players' egos are getting out of control and that the rule was made so that "unsportsmanlike" conduct wasn't promoted — but what about the fans?

Most fans enjoy seeing creative touchdown celebrations. The few players who cross the line — like Owens — shouldn't ruin it for everyone.

These dances are a tradition started by greats such as Elbert "Ickey" Woods, who started the classic Ickey Shuffle, and O.J. Santiago, who supposedly created the "Dirty Bird" dance used by the Atlanta Falcons. These dances were done because the player had made an amazing score and was expressing his joy in a creative way for the fans' enjoyment.

The bottom line is that the NFL has to draw the line somewhere, and some touchdown dances will end up on the wrong side. But as long as players are willing to continue paying the fine, the tradition should triumph over the No Fun League — oops, I mean the National Football League.