

An Opt-In-And-Trade Is James Harden's Best Path To The Sixers

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA – FEBRUARY 06: Ben Simmons #25 of the Philadelphia 76ers guards James ... [+] Harden #13 of the Brooklyn Nets throughout the 3rd quarter at Wells Fargo Center on February 06, 2021 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. KEEP IN MIND TO USER: User specifically acknowledges and concurs that, by downloading and or utilizing this picture, User is granting the terms of the Getty Images License Agreement. (Photo by Tim Nwachukwu/Getty Images)

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It's appearing significantly most likely that James Harden will carry on from the Brooklyn Nets this offseason.

On Tuesday, Jake Fischer of Bleacher Report reported that "Harden has actually just recently notified numerous confidants— consisting of previous colleagues and coaches— of his interest in checking out other chances beyond Brooklyn this summertime." He can end up being an unlimited totally free representative by decreasing his \$474 million gamer choice for the 2022-23 season, although no groups presently forecast to have adequate salary-cap area to sign him outright.

That background is hanging over the Philadelphia 76ers as they weigh whether to deal unhappy star Ben Simmons prior to the NBA's Feb. 10 trade due date.

On Monday, Shams Charania and Sam Amick of The Athletic reported "that the 76ers are thought to choose to wait in order to pursue Harden or another super star in the offseason and therefore wish to conserve Simmons for that possible sign-and-trade instead of take what's readily available on the present market." Later on that day, sources informed Keith Pompey of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that Harden "would invite having fun with Embiid."

To manage a sign-and-trade for Harden, the Sixers would need to remain under the league's forecasted \$1516 million tax apron for the totality of next season. They might pull that off by sending Simmons and Furkan Korkmaz in the Harden sign-and-trade and either trading or waiving Danny Green, who has a totally non-guaranteed \$10 million income next season.

But both the Sixers and Harden ought to choose an opt-in-and-trade rather.

If Harden opts out this summertime, his optimum beginning wage will be simply north of \$465 million,

which is 105 percent of his wage this year (\$443 million). He 'd be qualified for a five-year handle 8 percent yearly raises if he re-signs with the Nets or a four-year handle 5 percent yearly raises if he signs somewhere else in totally free company or gets sign-and-traded someplace.

In overall, Harden might sign a five-year, \$2699 million agreement with the Nets or a four-year, \$2001 million agreement with another group after pulling out. He 'd be shunning a \$614 million income in 2026-27 by pulling out this summer season and finalizing somewhere else.

Harden will be heading into his age-37 season in 2026-27 Unless he continues to dip into an MVP level over the next 4 seasons or the wage cap leaps tremendously, he isn't most likely to get that large of an income the next time he strikes complimentary company.

But if he gets his \$474 million gamer alternative on the condition of being traded to the Sixers or in other places, he can optimize his incomes while getting the new beginning he apparently desires.

If Harden were to sign an extension and after that instantly get traded, he might just include 2 years to his present handle 5 percent yearly raises. He 'd need to wait 6 months after being traded prior to ending up being eligible for his complete four-year extension with 8 percent yearly raises.

Since his gamer choice (\$474 million) is greater than his max income if he pulls out (\$465 million), those 8 percent yearly raises would intensify over the life of his brand-new agreement. He 'd make about \$5 million more by means of deciding in and later on signing an extension than he would by decreasing his gamer alternative to end up being an unlimited totally free representative.

The Sixers and/or other interested suitors must choose that path, too. Unlike with a sign-and-trade, groups would not be hard-capped if they obtain Harden by means of a typical trade and after that extend him 6 months later on.

To obtain Harden this summertime after he decided in, a group would need to send a minimum of \$378 million in wage. Simmons alone is set to make \$354 million next year, so the Sixers might package any of Green (\$100 million), Korkmaz (\$ 5.0 million) or Georges Niang (\$ 3.5 million) to make the cash work.

Rather than losing Green *and* Korkmaz to remain under the apron with a Harden sign-and-trade, an opt-in-and-trade might enable the Sixers to keep among the 2. They 'd likewise be totally free to utilize their \$6.2 million taxpayer mid-level exception considering that they would not be hard-capped. Disallowing other lineup modifications, they would not have adequate breathing space under the apron to utilize the taxpayer MLE if they obtain Harden by means of sign-and-trade.

When he was running the Houston Rockets, Sixers group president Daryl Morey persuaded Chris Paul to go the opt-in-and-trade path when he obtained Paul from the Los Angeles Clippers in 2017 Harden needs to choose whether to get his choice by June 29, so he 'd need to make certain the Nets wanted to trade him prior to doing so. The Sixers would likewise likely require guarantees about his determination to sign the extension 6 months after the trade.

If Simmons and Korkmaz or Green does not look like an appropriate return for Harden from Brooklyn's viewpoint, consider what other stars have actually brought in current sign-and-trades. The Sixers got just Josh Richardson for Jimmy Butler in 2019, and the Toronto Raptors got just Precious Achiuwa and Goran Dragic for Kyle Lowry this previous summer season.

The Nets would require to trade Harden prior to the Feb. 10 trade due date if they wish to optimize their return for him, however they aren't most likely to do so. They're presently the title favorites this season, according to FanDuel Sportsbook, and they'll likely invest the next 5 months trying to encourage Harden to stay long-lasting.

If Harden does choose he wishes to play somewhere else next season, however, an opt-in-and-trade is the very best method for him to optimize his incomes *and* his future group's opportunities of winning a champion.

Unless otherwise kept in mind, all statistics by means of NBA.com, PBPStats, Cleaning the Glass or Basketball Reference All income info through Spotrac

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