

Terrence Ross, Orlando Magic

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If there was any doubt about what [Magic](#) swingman [Terrence Ross](#)—among the elder statesmen of the Orlando roster at age 30—has left in the tank, he responded emphatically last week with a 22-point fourth quarter to help the Magic upset the Knicks at Madison Square Garden. Ross did not know why, exactly, his scoring sparked to that extent and was at a loss when asked about it.

“That second half,” Ross said, “more opportunities to score and shoot. It kind of, like, came to me.”

For six years, opportunities to score have just come to Ross with the Magic. He has been the most consistent presence for a team that has overhauled itself during that span, averaging 14.2 points, mostly off the bench. During last year’s [purge of veterans](#) at the trading deadline, when Nikola Vucevic, Aaron Gordon and Evan Fournier were shipped out as the team leaned into its rebuilding project, Ross was kept around. His veteran presence was welcome among the Magic’s trove of youngsters, but also, the team simply did not get a good enough offer for him.

Here in the early going of the season, the question for the Magic looms: Can they get a reasonable deal for Ross this time around?

“He is a good scorer, but really, he is kind of seen as just an average player,” on Eastern Conference front-office exec said. “You know what he is going to bring, and everyone loves to have a good bench presence like that. Everybody is going to say they want that. But no one is going to actually give up a first-round pick for it. Orlando, they are in the market for first-rounders. And teams don’t want to give up first-rounders for a guy who is not a great shooter and gives you 12, 14 points off the bench. Those guys are not hard to find, at least that is how the thinking goes.”

Ross has a team-friendly contract, making \$12.5 million this year and descending to \$11.5 million next year. That’s attractive to contending teams looking for some punch off their bench. But is it worth giving up a first-round pick? No team has yet made that leap. If there was a first-rounder to be had for Ross at last year’s trade deadline, the exec pointed out, Ross would already be gone.

## Knicks, Bulls Among Teams With Potential Interest In Ross

Of the teams discussed in connection with Ross, the [Knicks have been the most](#) prominent. New York could give up former first-rounders Kevin Knox and Obi Toppin for Ross, but that would not likely be very satisfying for either side—the Knicks would have to acknowledge their failure in both the 2018 and 2020 drafts, while the Magic would come away with two players who have been busts thus far and no future picks.

Kevin Knox, Knicks

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But expect other teams to kick the tires on Ross. The Bulls, most obviously, [need bench scoring](#) and are lacking depth on the wing. Chicago's bench averages just 24.2 points, 29<sup>th</sup> in the NBA, and the Bulls have a spare future first-rounder—Portland's 2022 pick—on hand to deal. Ross probably makes most sense for the Bulls, who are in win-now mode after an active offseason and a hot regular-season start.

Memphis, which is also struggling with bench scoring (27.4 points, 27<sup>th</sup> in the NBA), is another contender for Ross. The Grizzlies have three extra future first-rounders on hand, two in 2022 (likely the Lakers pick and Utah's pick) and one in 2024 (from Golden State), and are also seeking to maintain their status as a playoff team in the Western Conference.

There will be others. Injuries will begin to tug at rosters across the league, putting pressure on front offices to make Band-Aid moves to stay in contention. Ross is a pretty good bandage, and will become more of a commodity as the trade deadline nears.

But the struggle for the Magic will be to create enough of a market to make someone fork over a first-rounder for Ross. That did not happen last year, when Ross could have been had. As Orlando's tear-down project plows forward, the team can only hope that Ross's value keeps building.

Source: [Goal Remains For Terrence Ross & Orlando Magic: Build Up Trade Value](#)