



Photo Credit: J.C Gellidon

## NBA Preview

BY HAMZA ISMAIL

**T**HE NBA IS BACK starting on October 18, and opening night has some great games to watch. The reigning champions, the Golden State Warriors, face off against the Lakers in Chase Center. The Warriors will not only raise their newest championship banner, but they will also get their championship rings on opening night. The Warriors are on top of the NBA as not only the defending champs, but they also managed to keep many key players. Andrew Wiggins, Jordan Poole, and even Andre Igudola are staying, at least for this season. The Lakers are looking to start the season off strong as they finished eleventh last season. They have a new coach, Darvin Ham, and Anthony Davis has played significant minutes in the preseason. Health and continuity are the Lakers biggest obstacle this basketball season.

The Sixers and the Celtics also will clash on opening night. The Celtics had a great postseason run last season, and they are looking to get back to the Finals. The Celtics added Malcolm Brogdon this year which will give the team a necessary play maker to run the offense. The Sixers still have James Harden and Joel Embid to lead the team. Injuries have stopped this duo from coalescing fully, but Harden entered training camp in great shape, which is a good start.

The NBA is more than just opening night matchups, as several players are returning this year. The Clippers have the most talent in the NBA with Kawhi, Paul George, and John Wall. Kawhi hasn't played since the second round of the 2021 playoffs. Jamal Murray and Michael Porter Jr have played some preseason games this year. Jokic will need all the help he

can get as the Western Conference gets more and more competitive. Zion is also coming back, and the Pelicans were a strong team without him. The Pelicans will be a tough team to face in the early round. Lastly, Ben Simmons is back with the Nets. The Nets were swept last year, and their many issues were a lackluster offense and horrendous defense. Simmons will provide passing and defense, jump shot or not.

Lastly, there are some trades that will look to pay off this year. Dejounte Murray, traded to the Hawks, will give Trae Young the defense this back court desperately needs.

Murray is a terrific defender and a great passer, so the Hawks have two guards who will keep this team's offense running at high efficiency.

The Cavs also have a great guard joining their back court in the form of Donovan Mitchell. Like Murray, he will provide size and an offensive spark to the rising Cavs. The Cavs and Hawks are must see T.V. Rudy Gobert is joining the Timberwolves this year as the Jazz blew up their roster this summer. Gobert is a great rim defender, and he covers all of Towns' shortcomings. In the playoffs, Gobert's offense may or may not sink the Wolves, but the NBA is an 82 game season, and they have time to find synergy with each other.

The NBA is as top heavy as it's ever been. There are at least four teams from each conference with championship aspirations, and many more teams who will present a problem in the playoffs. This season will be as jam packed as any other season, and it will be interesting to see who will rise to the top.

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