

Israeli NBA Star Deni Avdija to Join Portland Trail Blazers After Washington Trades Him

Israel's biggest basketball star, 23-year-old Deni Avdija, will soon move across the United States after the Washington Wizards traded him all the way to the other end of the continent, to the Portland Trail Blazers in Oregon.

According to U.S. media reports, the Wizards surprisingly traded the promising wing in exchange for Malcolm Brogdon, the 14th pick in this year's draft; Carlton Carrington, a conditional 2029 first-round pick; and two later second-round picks.

Avdija was the highest Israeli draft selection in history, being picked 9th by the Wizards in 2020. After three solid seasons of slow and steady improvement, the Israeli athlete had a breakout year last season and took sixth place in the year's "Most Improved Player" voting.

The Washington Wizards are trading F Deni Avdija to the Portland Trail Blazers for Malcolm Brogdon and the 14th pick tonight and 2029 pick, sources tell ESPN.

– Adrian Wojnarowski (@wojespn) June 26, 2024

Avdija averaged an efficient 14.7 points, up from just under 10 the season before, with a 50.6 field-goal percentage and a 37.4 three-point percentage while playing an average of 30 minutes in his 75 games last season.

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In addition, he showed his all-around game, garnering more than seven rebounds and dishing out 3.8 assists per game, both career highs.

The highlight of the season came in February when Avdija torched the New Orleans Pelicans to the clip of 43 points – the highest-scoring game by an Israeli player in history.

The previous record of 36 points was held by 10-year NBA veteran Omri Casspi, who, for now, remains Israel's most successful player in the world's premier basketball league.

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After many Israeli NBA fans were frustrated to see Avdija being wasted on a perennially disappointing team like the Wizards, he will now join a talented but unproven roster in Portland which is in the middle of a rebuild after its star player, Damian Lillard, left for Milwaukee, Wisconsin a year ago.

Avdija will now be one of the more experienced players on a roster that includes this year's 7th pick, center Donovan Clingan, the team's potential star, 20-year-old point guard Scoot Henderson – who was picked 3rd last year – as well as 21-year-old guard Shaedon Sharpe, 25-year-old guard Anfernee Simons, and 2018's first pick, center Deandre Ayton.

The Wizards trade came as somewhat of a surprise after the team had signed Avdija to a four-year, \$55 million deal extension last offseason.

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