

Boston Celtics trade away 2024 NBA Champion Kristaps Porzingis



Kristaps Porzingis has been traded to the Atlanta Hawks in a three-team deal that has also included the Brooklyn Nets after just two years spent in Bean-town.

The 29 year old was packaged with a 2nd round pick to earn the Celtics Georges Niang and another 2nd round pick. The Nets also acquired Terrence Mann and the 22nd pick of the draft from the Hawks.

The Latvian Center was pivotal to the Celtics dominant NBA Finals win over the Dallas Mavericks last year, despite being largely absent for the first three rounds of the 2024 Playoff run.

Despite his performances in 2024, the big man was largely ineffective during the Celtic's 2025 Playoff run as he mightily struggled due to an unknown viral infection.

Porzingis' departure from Boston comes as little surprise given the organization looks to trim the players pay-roll in order to avoid heavy salary cap penalties from being in the second apron of the luxury tax.

A team in the second apron has heavy trade sanctions as they can not send cash in a deal, send multiple players in a single deal or even use a trade exemptions to balance player salaries.

A second apron team also has limitations when signing free agents as they are disqualified from using the designated mid-level exception to sign a player. These restrictions deny the Celtics flexibility in the future to re-tool their roster.

The 2024 Champion was traded less than 24 hours after fellow teammate Jrue Holiday was sent to the Portland Trailblazers for Anfernee Simons, which as a result has successfully removed the C's back into the first apron.

Celtics General Manager Brad Stevens has acted quickly to reconstruct his expensive roster, which may have been influenced heavily by the injury suffered by superstar Jayson Tatum.

Tatum ruptured his achilles in the fourth quarter of Game 4 against the New York Knicks in the Eastern Conference Semi-Finals and is expected to miss the entirety of the 2025-26 NBA season.

His absence has hampered the Celtic's immediate championship aspirations which has made these trades seem logical to Celtic's fans as a non-championship contender should not be a second apron team.

Porzingis' introduction to the Celtics was bittersweet as the trade that brought him to Massachusetts involved sending away cult hero Marcus Smart back in June 2023. Despite this, it is extremely arguable that Porzingis has gone down as a cult hero in Boston himself.

Having played 99 regular season games for the Celtics whilst averaging 19.8 points, Porzingis will largely be remembered by Celtic's fans due to his performances in the 2024 NBA Finals where he valiantly played through injury to help bring a record 18th Championship to the city of Boston.