

Predicting the 2025 NBA All Star Reserves



The 2025 edition of the annual NBA All Star game is set to take place on Sunday the 16th of February and with the starters already announced, NBA fans are eagerly waiting for the coaches to determine the 14 reserve players that will be headed to the Bay Area.

On TNT's Inside the NBA, the quartet of Ernie Johnson, Kenny Smith, Charles Barkley and Shaquille O'Neal announced the starters for both the Eastern and Western conferences.

The starters for the Eastern Conference comprised of Cavalier guard Donovan Mitchell, two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, current NBA Champion Jayson Tatum and Knicks teammates Jalen Brunson and Karl Anthony-Towns.

The Western Conference starters boasted four league MVP's who have also won championships in the form of LeBron James, Stephen Curry, Kevin Durant and Nikola Jokic. MVP frontrunner Shai Gilgeous-Alexander from the Oklahoma City Thunder was also selected.

Although selections are following tradition, the format for the game has changed as a mini four team tournament will replace the usual 48 minute encounter that fans have been accustomed to.

Three teams will be made up of the 24 All Star selections (with the fourth team being the winners of the Rising Stars Challenge) and with 10 of those men already being confirmed I will predict the remaining 14 participants that will play at the Chase Center on the 16th of February.

The reserves must comprise of two guards, three front court players and two wild cards from both the East and the West.

EASTERN CONFERENCE

GUARDS

LaMelo Ball



The youngest of the three famed Ball brothers, LaMelo has easily fulfilled his father Lavar's prophecy of Melo being the best brother to play in the NBA. This would not be Ball's first experience playing in the annual event as he was selected as an injury replacement for Kevin Durant in 2022. The 2021 Rookie of the Year has been playing at an exceptional level this season for the Charlotte Hornets averaging career bests in both scoring and assists. In fact, the California native received the most fan votes among Eastern Conference guards with over 2 million votes. The reason he was not selected as a starter was due to

the media vote where he ranked in 7th behind players such as Damian Lillard and Darius Garland. This is probably due to the Hornets position in the Eastern Conference standings where they rank in 14th place with only 12 wins this season. Whilst I do believe winning should be rewarded there is only so much that one man can do to help his team win and LaMelo should not be penalized given how great of a player he has become in this league.

Trae Young



Whilst the decision to select Ball was straight forward, picking the second guard to represent the East was more challenging. Ice Trae is one of the most polarizing players in the NBA in recent seasons as his Atlanta Hawks have never really been able to stand out amongst the teams in the East and they currently sit in 9th place with a losing team record of 22-24. However, Young is one of the best offensive talents this league has to offer and this is expertly displayed with Young averaging nearly 23 points per game whilst leading the association with a career-high 11.5 assists. Young may be a 3 time All Star but his selections have been inconsistent. He has never played in consecutive years having been a starter in the 2020 and 2022 game. He was also an injury replacement for Joel Embiid last season. His peers and fans do believe he is an All Star calibre talent as he was voted 4th and 5th respectively for guards.

FRONT COURT

Jaylen Brown



Jaylen Brown was an integral part of the Celtics championship run in 2024 and his efforts were noticed as he was awarded both the Larry Bird ECF MVP as well as the coveted Bill Russell Finals MVP. Unfortunately for Brown, he is the 1b to his teammate Jayson Tatum who is one of three men to receive a unanimous starting berth from all 95 members of the media vote. Brown himself is a three time All Star and has an All-NBA selection under his belt so it seems probable that he will be joining his fellow Jay in San Francisco. JB is averaging a similar scoring output as last season with a slight decline in his field goal percentage as it falls from almost 50% to 45%. That being said Brown is still one of the best forwards in the NBA and despite the Celtics midseason slump the C's are still comfortably 2nd in the Eastern Conference and a serious threat to repeat.

Evan Mobley



The Cleveland Cavaliers are running away with the number one seed and that is thanks in part to the play of Cavs big man Evan Mobley. Mobley is averaging a career-high in scoring with 18.1 ppg and is shooting above 40% from three point range. His contributions to Cleveland have allowed the Cavs to win 37 games including an incredible 15 game win streak to start the season. Whilst Tatum and Antetokounmpo received the maximum 95 votes from the media, Mobley managed to win a few votes away from the other starter Towns.

Paolo Banchero



Banchero has rejuvenated the Orlando Magic franchise which has struggled since the departure of Dwight Howard in 2012. The 2023 Rookie of the Year propelled the Magic to a 47 win season during his sophomore campaign (the most since the 2010-11 campaign) and performed well in a narrow loss in seven games to the Cleveland Cavaliers in the first round of the Playoffs. Banchero is averaging 24 ppg this season and had a monster 50 ball against the Pacers where he also grabbed 13 boards, had 9 assists and blocked 2 shots. Only Tracy McGrady and Shaquille O'Neal have scored more in one game whilst representing the Magic. A second All Star call up should be a no-brainer for the coaches selecting the reserves.

WILDCARDS

Cade Cunningham



The Detroit Pistons have 23 wins so far this season. They have a total of 27 wins over the previous two seasons combined. They have never won more than 23 games in a single season since the 2018-19 campaign where Blake Griffin lit up Little Caesars Arena. They are in the hunt for a playoff berth and Cade Cunningham is becoming the player that many fans expected the number one pick of the 2021 draft to be. Cunningham is having a career year in both scoring and assists as he is averaging almost 25 ppg as well as 9.4 apg. The confidence that Cunningham has been playing with combined with the Pistons improvement in the standings should be enough to warrant Cade his first All Star game appearance.

Damian Lillard



This may potentially be a controversial selection as Darius Garland was also considered for the final wild spot. Unfortunately for Garland the All Star weekend is primarily a showcase of the NBA's star power, which is what Lillard has in abundance. Whilst the Cavs have an incredible record of 37-9 this season, the Milwaukee Bucks have slowly improved after a rough start to the season. The Bucks are currently fourth in the East and were also the second ever winners of the NBA Cup after beating the Thunder in December. Dame Dolla has been consistent in his play averaging around 25 ppg and was also the 2024 Kobe Bryant All Star game MVP. The NBA 75th Anniversary Team member was also fourth in fan voting for his position, so it's obvious that Dame should be headed home to the Bay Area to participate in his 9th All Star game.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

GUARDS

Luka Doncic



Luka Doncic is a future basketball Hall of Famer, a future MVP and a future NBA Champion. The Slovenian is one of the best basketball players in the world today and would have already won his first NBA championship had it not been for the juggernaut that was the Boston Celtics last season. Doncic has been an All Star every season of his NBA career apart from his rookie year however the only reason his selection may not be a formality would be due to his current injury. Doncic has missed 25 games so far this season and has not featured for the Dallas Mavericks since Christmas day. There is optimism that he will return to the hardwood prior to the All Star break however that does remain to be seen. Doncic is averaging 28.1 ppg, 8.3 rpg and 7.8 apg for this season.

Anthony Edwards



Anthony Edwards has been an All Star for the past two seasons and in that time has progressed to becoming one of the most exciting guards in the NBA. Ant's play on the court has been so good that he has controversially been compared by some fans to the great Michael Jordan. Whilst the Minnesota Timberwolves do not look as dominant as they did last season that has not affect Ant's own level of play. Edwards has markedly improved his three point shooting as he now nets long balls at 42% whilst also shooting nearly 10 threes a game. Ant-Man finished third in both the media and player votes whilst also finishing fourth in fan voting.

FRONT COURT

Victor Wembanyama



The 21 year old French Phenom was always likely to be an All Star sooner rather than later. Wemby is averaging 24.5 ppg whilst also leading the league in blocked shots with 150 swats. The has 60 more blocks than second placed Anthony Davis. The 7 foot 4 inch giant is a human spectacle and his style of play - which is unconventional for a center - makes him one of the most entertaining players the league has ever seen. For this reason alone is why he should be in the All Star game. Wembanyama was also voted second in the media to start the game behind only Nikola Jokic. He had more media votes than both LeBron James and Kevin Durant combined. Wemby is the future and he will have a plethora of opportunities to be an All Star starter for years to come.

Anthony Davis



After winning a championship in the bubble almost five years ago Anthony Davis has had unfortunate luck with injuries, however it seems as if AD has returned to his best self once again. Monster performances such as his 44 points and 23 rebound win against the Charlotte Hornets exemplify why the Lakers traded away so much to pry AD away from New Orleans six years ago. At 31 years of age Davis is leading the Lakers in points, rebounds, steals and blocks and was voted ahead of teammate LeBron James to start the All Star game by the media. A 10th All Star game selection seems imminent for the Brow as he has guided his Lakers to 5th in the West as things stand.

Jaren Jackson Jr



The final frontcourt spot is tough to choose but Jaren Jackson Jr has been a key contributor to the Memphis Grizzlies successful bounce-back campaign thus far. Winning basketball should be rewarded and the Grizzlies have two possible candidates to appear at the NBA's annual showcase. However, unlike Ja Morant, JJJ is not shrouded in controversy. The Power Forward plays both sides of the ball at an exceptional level and after missing out on a second call up last year his performances do warrant serious consideration. The former Defensive Player of the Year does lead his team in scoring and has helped the Grizzlies to a 31-16 record where they sit in third place in the Western Conference.

WILDCARDS

Kyrie Irving



His off the court antics may be questionable at times but there is no questioning Kyrie's ability on the hardwood. Irving's skillset and shot creating ability is tailor made for the All Star Game. The 2016 NBA Champion is averaging 24 ppg this season and was crucial to the Mavericks NBA Finals run last year. The Mavericks had a record of 19-11 prior to the Dončić's calf strain injury and have been freefalling in the Western Conference having only won six games since then. Irving himself had to sit out for seven of those fixtures due to a bulging disc in his back. This should not be used to penalise the masterful guard as he has been one of the better guards in the West and was voted in 4th place by fans and the players to start the 2025 All Star Game. Irving was last voted an All Star in 2023.

Alperen Sengun



The Houston Rockets have the second best record in the Western Conference. They are on pace for roughly 56 wins which would be their best regular season win total since James Harden and Chris Paul led the Rockets to 65 wins in the infamous 2017-18 season. Ime Udoka's squad have been extremely impressive this season and it would be fitting that the last wild card spot should be a representative from H-Town. The Turkish Center Alperen Sengun has incredible playmaking for a big man and recently achieved an incredible milestone by becoming the youngest Center in NBA history to record 1000 assists. Sengun averages an impressive 19.2 ppg and 10.4 rpg and is central figure in the way Udoka wants his team to play offensively.