

Steve Smith – STAT Factor Notes – January 19, 2022

ORLANDO MAGIC (8-37) vs. PHILADELPHIA 76ERS (25-18)

Magic

- Orlando has dropped 12 of their past 13 games, including two-straight coming into Wednesday. They're the third-worst shooting team in the league (42.6%) and the third-worst scoring team (101.6 points/game). Of the Magic's 37 losses this season, 22 of them have come by 10+ points ... they only have one win by 10+ points this season.

76ers

- Despite their record, the 76ers are last in the league in rebounding at 42.1 per game and Joel Embiid averages almost exactly 25% of all of their rebounds (10.5 per game). Philly is coming off of a 117-98 loss to Washington, but they are 9-2 in their last 11 games. Embiid has scored 30+ points in 10 of those last 11 games and is averaging 31.8 points per game during that stretch.

BROOKLYN NETS (27-16) vs. WASHINGTON WIZARDS (23-21)

Nets

- Since moving to their best mark of the season (23-9) following a win over the Clippers on December 27, Brooklyn has gone just 4-7 in their last 11 games, including a 114-107 loss to Cleveland last time out. Kevin Durant leads the league in scoring with 29.3 points per game but is now expected to miss 4-6 weeks with a sprained MCL, leaving a massive hole in the Nets lineup. James Harden has scored 20+ points in five straight games and is averaging 25.2 points over that stretch. Defense has been a problem for the team as they've allowed 117.4 points per game over their last 10 and 100+ points in 19 straight.

Wizards

- No team makes fewer three-point buckets than Washington (10.1 per game) or allows fewer three-point buckets per game (10.7). Kyle Kuzma has suddenly become a rebounding machine for the Wizards, recording 10+ boards in 10 of his last 13 games and averaging 11.4 per game over that stretch while also adding 22.5 points per game in the same time frame. After averaging 13.4 points and 6.2 rebounds in December, Kuzma is putting up 24.0 points and 12.3 rebounds in January.

MINNESOTA TIMBERWOLVES (22-22) vs. ATLANTA HAWKS (18-25)

Wolves

- Minnesota has won two straight and six of their last eight games, averaging 120.0 points per game during that stretch. The team hasn't shot worse than 40% from the field since December 12, a stretch of 18 games. The #1 overall pick in the 2020 Draft, Anthony Edwards, has been getting more efficient as the season has gone on, with his field goal percentage rising in each month, and sits at a season-high 47.4% in January (9 games). He's also shooting 44.7% from three over his last 11 games after shooting 33.8% from deep in his first 27 games.

Hawks

- Atlanta snapped a five-game overall losing streak and a 10-game home losing streak with a win over Milwaukee last time out, 121-114. Trae Young scored 30 points in the contest, his first time with 30+ since his 56-point outburst against Portland on January 3. The 56-point performance capped a 16-game stretch where Young averaged 32.3 points per game, but he's scored only 23.7 over his last six. Despite that, he still sits fourth in the NBA with 27.7 points per game this season.

CHARLOTTE HORNETS (24-20) vs. BOSTON CELTICS (23-22)

Hornets

- Charlotte has won five of their past six, including a 97-87 win over the Knicks last time out. That victory was just the sixth time this year the Hornets failed to score 100 points and only the second time they won a game with fewer than 100 points. Miles Bridges scored a season-high 38 points in the contest and grabbed 12 rebounds. Bridges has three double-doubles in his past seven games after recording six double-doubles in his first 35 games this season.

Celtics

- Like Charlotte, Boston has won five of their past six. Jayson Tatum is 8th in the NBA in scoring at 25.5 points per game and he dropped 41 the last time these two teams met back in October, one of two 40+ point games for him this season (other was vs. Milwaukee). He's been struggling from three-point range lately, shooting 25.0% from deep over his last six, dropping him to 32.3% on the season (previous career-low was 37.3% in '18-19).

PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS (18-25) vs. MIAMI HEAT (28-16)

Blazers

- Portland has won four of its last five, including a 98-88 win over Orlando last time out in which CJ McCollum returned from a 17-game absence (collapsed lung) to score 16 points in 28 minutes. Jusuf Nurkic scored a team-high 21 and added a season-high 22 rebounds, giving him 36 boards over the past two games (averaging 22 points and 18 rebounds over the past two, both wins). Anfernee Simmons is averaging 26.1 points per game in January and scored 28 points when these two teams met on January 5th.

Heat

- Miami has won five of its past six, including a 104-99 win over Toronto last time out in which Bam Adebayo returned from a 22-game absence (thumb surgery) and scored 14 points while grabbing 9 rebounds. Jimmy Butler had his second triple-double of the season in the victory, scoring 19 points to go with 10 rebounds and assists. Tyler Herro led the team with 23 points and is averaging 22.1 points over the past 10 games.

MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES (31-15) vs. MILWAUKEE BUCKS (27-19)

Grizzlies

- The Grizz are one of the hottest teams in the NBA, winning 12 of their past 13 games and they bring a six-game road winning streak into this contest. Ja Morant is averaging 25.9 points over that stretch (12 games, as he missed the team's win over the Clippers) and shooting over 50% from the field (50.9%). Memphis is 14-3 in games where Morant scores 25+ points this season.

Bucks

- The Bucks have been struggling of late, losing six of their past eight games, including the last two in a row. In their most recent loss to Atlanta, Khris Middleton scored a season-high 34 points, the first time this year he's gone for 30+. Giannis is third in the NBA in scoring at 28.5 points per game and is averaging 31.6 points in eight January games. He has 17 games this season of 30+ points and five with 40+. The team is at its best when Giannis is sharing the basketball, going 11-1 in games where he has 8+ assists and 8-0 when he has at least 9.

CLEVELAND CAVALIERS (28-18) VS. CHICAGO BULLS (27-15)

Cavs

- Cleveland has won five-straight games as they continue to be one of the biggest surprises in the league this season. Rookie Evan Mobley continues to be the odds-on favorite to win the Rookie of the Year Award (-150 odds), leading all rookies in rebounding at 7.9 per game while averaging 14.9 points. However, he has not made a three-point basket since December 28 (11 games). Darius Garland leads the team with 19.7 points per game and is in the midst of his best three-game scoring stretch of the season, averaging 27.0 points over the past three, including tying a season-high with 32 points against the Spurs on Friday.

Bulls

- Talk about teams going in opposite directions despite similar records, the Bulls have lost four straight and five of their past six following a nine-game winning streak. Chicago remains the top team in the Eastern Conference by winning percentage but would fall out of the top spot with a loss and a win by either Miami or Brooklyn on Wednesday. DeMar DeRozan leads the team in scoring at 25.6 points but has struggled of late averaging just 19.7 over his last six and failing to reach 20 points in three of those six games (had reached 20+ points in 13-straight games prior to this stretch).

TORONTO RAPTORS (21-20) vs. DALLAS MAVERICKS (25-19)

Raptors

- Toronto has dropped three of four following a six-game winning streak. Fred VanVleet has been hot of late, averaging 27.4 points over his last 12 games (19.4 in his first 26 contests). Over the 12 games, VanVleet has made 3+ three pointers in each game and 5+ in eight of the 12 (shooting 43.7% from deep over that stretch). Pascal Siakam recorded his first triple-double of the season on Saturday against Milwaukee (30-10-10) and is averaging 23.3 points, 8.8 rebounds and 6.8 assists per game in January.

Mavs

- Dallas has won three straight and nine of their past 10 games. Luka Doncic recorded a triple-double in their win over OKC on Monday, his third triple-double in the past five games. Since returning from a 10-game absence in December, Doncic is averaging 21.8 points, 10.3 rebounds and 9.6 assists in eight games played (Mavericks are 7-1). These teams last met back in October and Doncic had 27 points, 12 assists and 9 rebounds in a Mavs victory. Over their past ten games, Dallas is averaging 106.1 points per game while holding opponents to 94.5 points (+11.6).

OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER (14-29) vs. SAN ANTONIO SPURS (16-28)

Thunder

- OKC has lost two straight, seven of their past eight and nine of the last 11 games. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, who leads the team in scoring at 22.7 points per game, has scored 30+ points in three of the past four games (averaging exactly 30.0 points during that stretch).

Spurs

- San Antonio has dropped 10 of its last 12 games. The team's leading scorer, Dejounte Murray, has been hot this month, averaging 23.8 points per game in eight contests. He also has four triple-doubles over his last 14 games and is tied with James Harden for third in the NBA with 7 this season (both Russell Westbrook and Nikola Jokic have 9). Murray and Harden are the only qualified players in the league averaging 19+ points and 8+ rebounds and assists this season.

HOUSTON ROCKETS (13-32) vs. UTAH JAZZ (29-15)

Rockets

- Houston has won two of its past three games but are just 3-12 over their past 15. Christian Wood has scored 20+ in six of the past seven games and is averaging 21.4 points over that stretch with three double-doubles.

Jazz

- Utah is going through a rough patch, losing five of their past six games. The team's leading scorer, Donovan Mitchell, will miss this game after entering the league's concussion protocol on Tuesday. Their second-leading scorer, Bojan Bogdanovic, has failed to score in double-digits in two of the past three games (35 points total over the past three). Rudy Gobert leads the league in rebounding (15.2 per game) and has reached double-digit boards in 19 straight games played. Additionally, he has double-doubles in 16-straight games played (leads league with 33 this season). He missed five games from January 5-January 12 (COVID) and the team went 1-4 (they are 28-11 with him in the lineup this season).

LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS (22-23) vs. DENVER NUGGETS (22-20)

Clippers

- LA has gone 5-8 since leading scorer Paul George went down with a torn UCL and he's now expected to miss several more weeks. Though the team's second-leading scorer is Reggie Jackson, Jackson has struggled without George, averaging just 13.8 points in his last 10 games, and has failed to reach 10 points in two of the past three. Nicolas Batum led the team with a season-high 32 points in a win over Indiana on Monday. It was the first time Batum had scored 30 points in a game since February of 2018.

Nuggets

- Nikola Jokic enters this game on a two-game triple-double streak and has three triple-doubles in January (tied with Russell Westbrook for the league lead with 9 this season). Although, his scoring has been down over the past five games, averaging just 21.0 points which is below his season average of 25.3 (10th in the NBA). He's recorded a double-double in 11 of his last 12 and is second in the NBA with 32 this season (Rudy Gobert has 33).

DETROIT PISTONS (10-33) vs. SACRAMENTO KINGS (18-28)

Pistons

- Detroit fell to 5-28 on December 29, which was the NBA's worst record. Since then, though, they've gone 5-5 over their past 10 and have jumped ahead of Orlando. However, the Pistons have lost four straight road games entering this contest (3-19 on the road this season). Despite the 5-5 record in their last 10, they are being outscored by over 10 points per game in that stretch and they are the second-lowest scoring team in the league for the season (101.1 points, just ahead of OKC's 100.8).

Kings

- Leading-scorer De'Aaron Fox is putting together a nice month, averaging 23.3 points per game in January on 50.0% shooting after averaging less than 21 points in each of the season's first three months. Harrison Barnes has cooled off considerably since a torrid start to the season. He started the season averaging 22.5 points per game over his first 11 but has averaged just 13.8 points per game since. He's scored 20+ points just one time over his last 16 outings.

INDIANA PACERS (15-29) vs. LOS ANGELES LAKERS (22-22)

Pacers

- Indiana has lost four straight and 10 of their past 11 games. They've been particularly poor on the road this season (3-17). Domantas Sabonis leads the team in scoring (18.9 points/game) and has averaged 22.8 points in January. However, he did most of his damage in the first four games of the month when he scored 121 points over those contests (30.3 points/game). Since a career-high 42-point outburst on January 8, Sabonis has not topped 20 points and is averaging just 15.3 points over the past four games. Caris LeVert has quietly averaged 22.5 points per game over his last 15.

Lakers

- LA beat the Jazz on Monday to snap a three-game skid. LeBron led the way with 25 and scored 20+ in 14-straight games and has scored 30+ in 11 of his last 14 (although not in either of the past two). The last time these teams met in November, James went for 39 points in an overtime victory. Russell Westbrook is in a light-scoring stretch, averaging just 11.4 points over his last five games. After recording triple-doubles in four-straight games to close out December, Westbrook has recorded just one double-double in eight January games and no triple-doubles, though he is still tied for the league lead with 9 this season (Nikola Jokic).