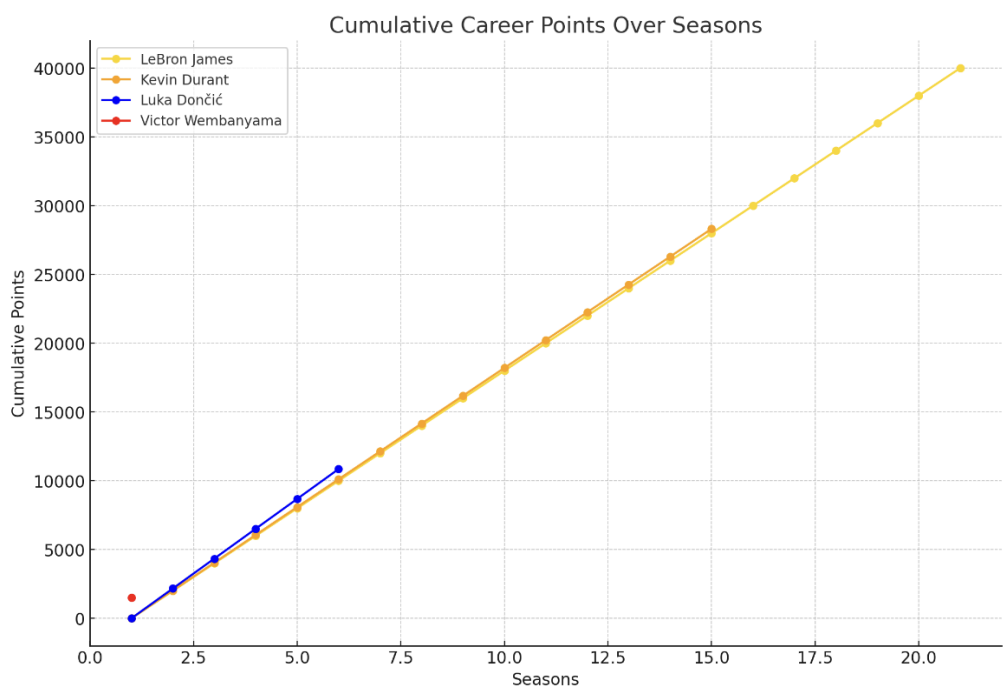


Data Story: "The Long Road to 40,000: Comparing NBA Legends and Rising Stars"

In the world of professional basketball, scoring 40,000 points is not just an achievement; it's a testament to skill, endurance, and consistency. This milestone, recently reached by LeBron James, sets a new benchmark in the annals of the NBA. But how do other stars—past and present—stack up in this quest? In this analysis, we compare LeBron with Kevin Durant, Luka Doncic, and rookie Victor Wembanyama, dissecting their journeys and projecting their paths to this scoring summit.

Visualization 1: Career Trajectory Line Graph



A line graph showcasing the cumulative career points over each season for LeBron James, Kevin Durant, Luka Doncic, and Victor Wembanyama.

I used Chatgpt to generate this visualization, I put in, “use the data of LeBron James: Reached 40,000 points in his 21st season. Kevin Durant: Has 28,318 points in what is his 15th season. Luka Doncic: Scored 10,855 points by his 6th season. Victor Wembanyama: Being new, in his

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1st season with a hypothetical 1,500 points as a starting figure as he is averaging 18 points per game” to create a line graph showcasing the cumulative career points over each season for LeBron James, Kevin Durant, Luka Dončić, and Victor Wembanyama.

This graph highlights LeBron's consistent scoring over his 21-season career, illustrating how his endurance and skill have kept him at the top. We contrast this with Durant's impressive yet injury-hampered journey, Dončić's explosive entry and continued ascent, and Wembanyama's budding career.

Player Analysis

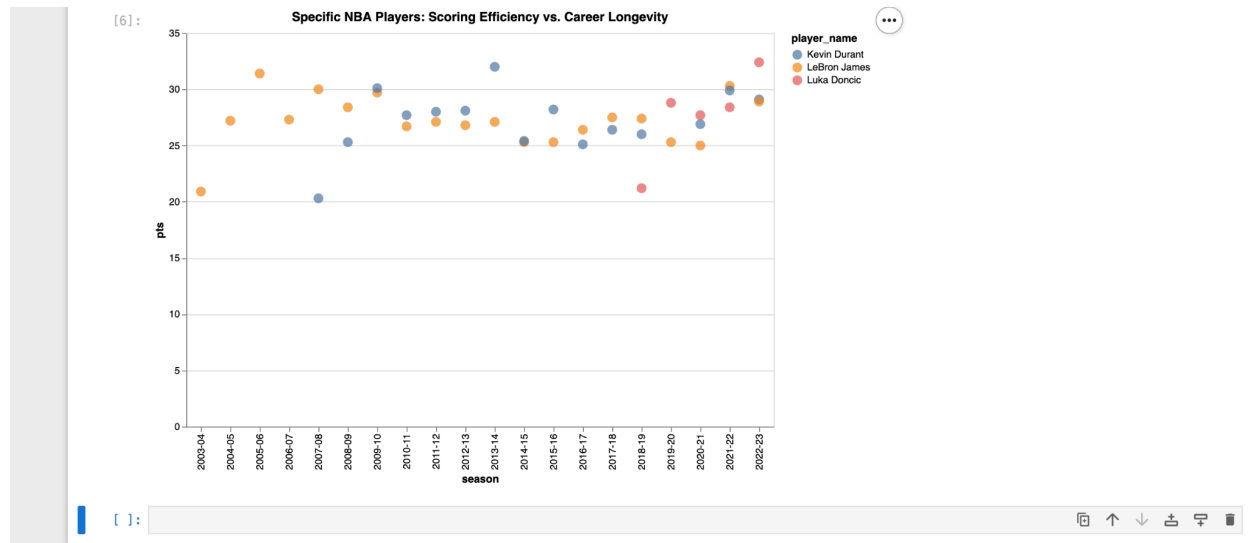
LeBron James: A model of consistency and versatility, LeBron's scoring journey showcases his adaptability and sustained excellence. With an average of over 25 points per game across his career, his path reflects not just a scorer's touch but also remarkable longevity.

Kevin Durant: Known for his efficiency and scoring prowess, Durant's path has been marked by breathtaking highs tempered by significant injuries. Despite this, his average remains impressive, and his place in the scoring legends is undeniable.

Luka Dončić: The young Maverick has made a name for himself with his remarkable scoring and playmaking. His trajectory suggests a potential to join the ranks of the NBA's elite, provided he maintains his pace and stays healthy.

Victor Wembanyama: The newcomer with towering expectations. His early performance indicates a bright future, already averaging 18 points per game in his rookie season, it seems that he is bound for greatness, but reaching 40,000 points is a marathon, not a sprint. His journey has only just begun.

Visualization 2: Efficiency vs. Longevity Scatterplot



A scatterplot comparing each player's scoring efficiency (points per game) against their career longevity (seasons played). **NB:** Victor Wembanyama is not on this visualization because he is a rookie and there's no official data for him yet on the websites.

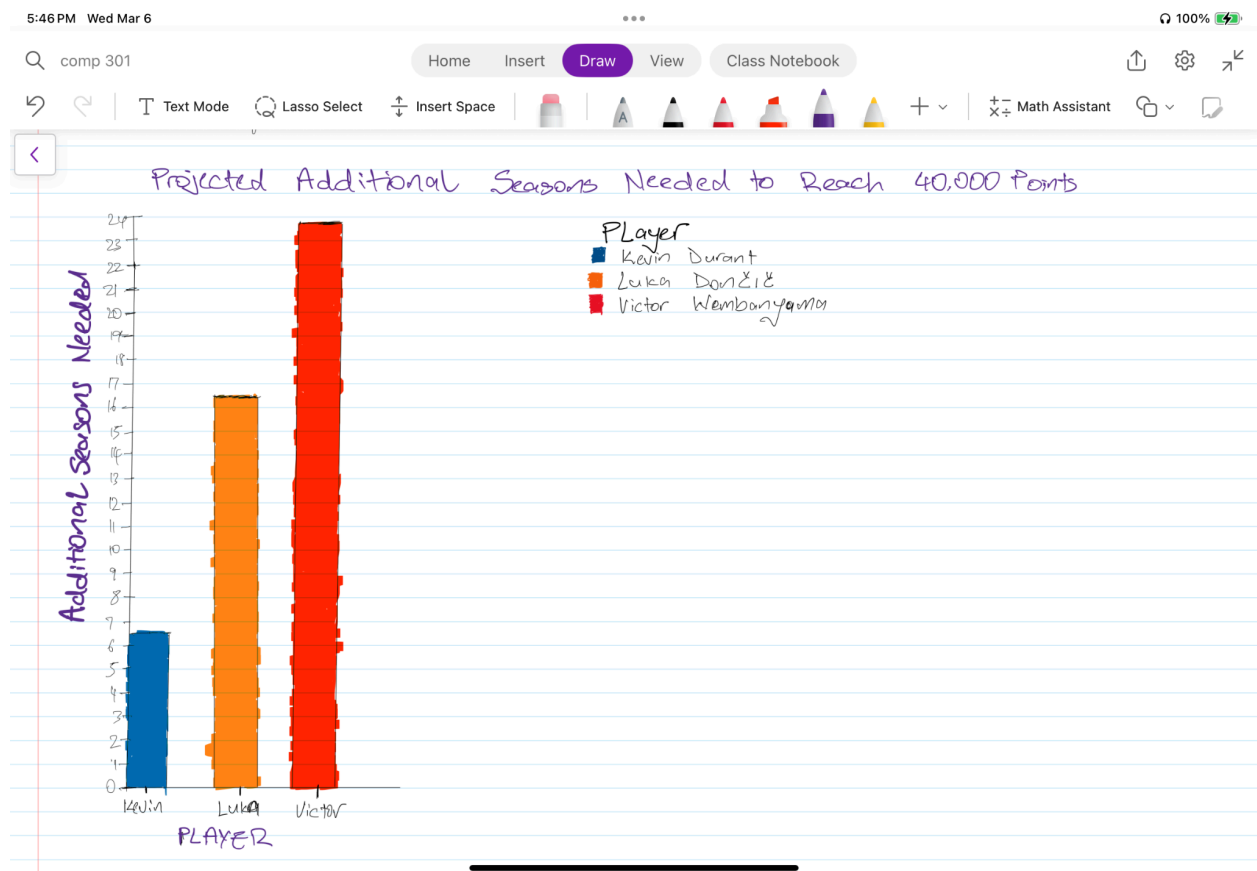
I used altair to create this scatterplot, you can find all the necessary code on how I built it in the notebook that I will submit together with this file.

This plot will juxtapose the players' ability to score heavily in each game against the backdrop of their NBA tenure, highlighting how both elements are crucial for reaching high career points.

Challenges and Projections

LeBron's trajectory sets a towering standard, combining high scoring with unmatched longevity. Durant, while efficient, faces the challenge of overcoming injuries to maintain his scoring legacy. Doncic appears as the potential heir apparent but must navigate the perils of NBA seasons to build a career that could rival the greats. For Wembanyama, the journey is speculative but filled with promise; his challenge will be to sustain performance over decades.

Visualization 3: Path to 40,000 Points Projection



A hypothetical projection bar chart estimating the number of seasons it would take Durant, Dončić, and Wembanyama to reach 40,000 points, based on their current scoring averages and assuming a full 82-game season.

This visualization provides a stark representation of the enormity of LeBron's achievement and what it would take for current stars and future talents to match or surpass this milestone.

I used my iPad and drawing skills to create a bar chart that shows how many seasons it will take Durant, Dončić and Wembanyama to score 40,000 points assuming they maintain their current scoring averages and play all 82 games every season without getting injured, which does not

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seem feasible because of their history with injuries and how the modern day NBA players treat their seasons.

LeBron James' journey to 40,000 points is a monumental feat, highlighting not just athletic prowess but also the resilience and consistency required to remain at the pinnacle of basketball scoring. For Durant, Doncic, and Wembanyama, the road is long and filled with uncertainties, but their stories are still being written. Will they reach this lofty peak? Time, talent, and tenacity will tell.

Sources

Analysis and insights were derived from career statistics and projections, with specific data referenced from the USA Today article, "LeBron James reaches 40,000 career points: Other challengers"

(<https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nba/lakers/2024/02/29/lebron-james-40000-career-points-other-challengers/72775797007/>)

Justinas. "NBA Players Data." Kaggle. Accessed [2024].

<https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/justinas/nba-players-data>.