Trae Young: Offensive Impact & Team Fit

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Executive Summary

Trae Young remains one of the league's most polarizing offensive engines: a high-usage, high-gravity creator capable of organizing functional offense almost single-handedly. Across his career, teams built around him have finished top-10 offensively in three seasons (2020–21 through 2022–23) and top-12 in four of the last five.

That ceiling comes with tradeoffs. Young's defensive limitations and ball-dominant style impose strict lineup requirements. Spacing, rim protection, and secondary creation are prerequisites.

This report evaluates where Trae Young's offensive impact has historically scaled, where it has strained team construction, and whether a transition to Washington would amplify his strengths or reproduce the same structural constraints.

Career Profile

Table 1: Trae Young offensive profile, breakout and prime seasons (2019–2025)

Season	Age	MPG	PPG	AST	REB	FGA	3PA	FTA	TS%	TOV
2019–20	21	35.3	29.6	9.3	4.3	20.8	9.5	9.3	0.60	4.8
2020–21	22	33.7	25.3	9.4	3.9	17.7	6.3	8.7	0.59	4.1
2021–22	23	34.9	28.4	9.7	3.7	20.3	8.0	7.3	0.60	4.0
2022–23	24	34.8	26.2	10.2	3.0	19.0	6.3	8.8	0.57	4.1
2023–24	25	36.0	25.7	10.8	2.8	18.7	8.7	7.5	0.57	4.4
2024–25	26	36.0	24.2	11.6	3.1	18.1	8.4	7.4	0.56	4.7

From 2019–20 through 2024–25, Young has lived firmly in offensive-engine territory, averaging roughly 26 points and 10 assists per game (Table 1). While raw production has remained stable, efficiency has dropped since its 2021–22 peak.

Offensive Identity
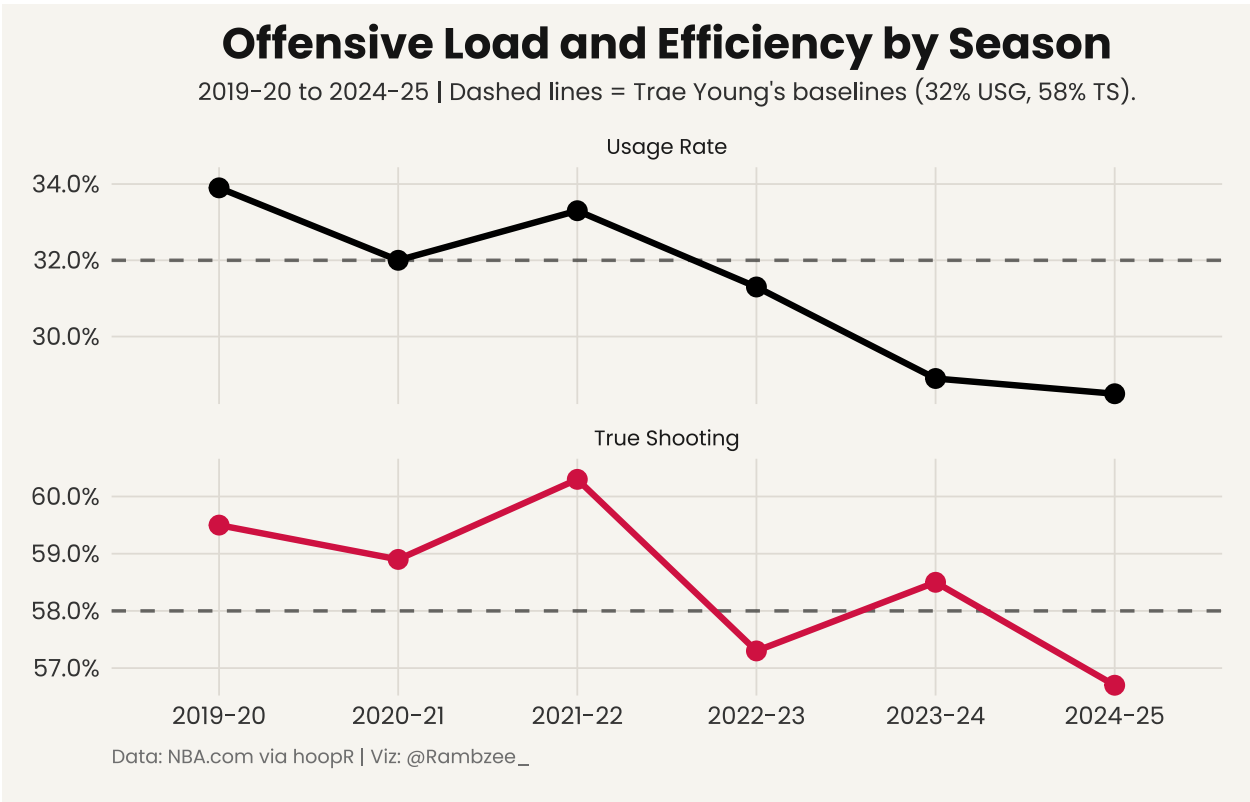
Usage Load & Efficiency

Figure 1: Usage rate vs TS% by season (Trae Young)

Young's game is defined by extreme responsibility. Usage and efficiency peak together in 2021–22, when he combined a heavy workload with above-average scoring efficiency (Figure 1). Since then, both measures have trended downward, reflecting a shift toward more off-ball involvement without a corresponding efficiency gain. This tension, ball dominance versus efficiency, defines a major issue in any Trae-centric offense.

Shot Diet & Conversion

Table 2: Trae Young shot-type efficiency, 2019–20 through 2024–25

Shot Type	FG%	2FG%	3P%	2PA	3PA	3 Share
All Jumpshots	37.8%	45.7%	35.7%	833	3141	79.0%
C&S	39.2%	16.7%	39.7%	12	585	98.0%
Dribble jumpers	37.5%	45.6%	34.9%	790	2492	75.9%
Runners	47.9%	47.9%		1994	0	
Rim	51.4%	51.4%		1726	0	

Young's offense is heavily jump-shot driven, which is consistent with his size and role. From 2019–20 through 2024–25, roughly 80% of his jump shots are threes (Table 2), tying his efficiency directly to spacing and rim finishing around him.
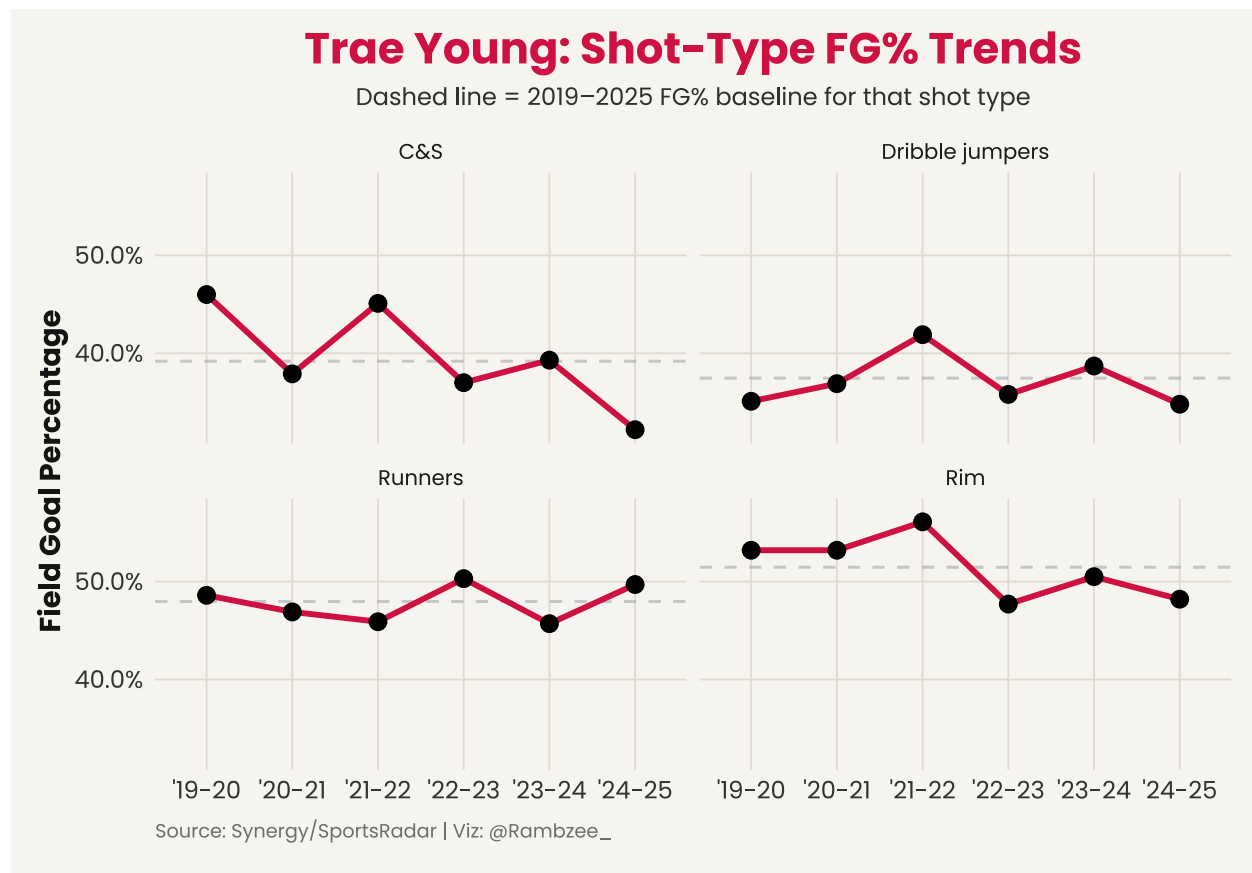
Figure 2: Shot type FG% over time (dashed = career weighted baseline).

Shot-type trends reinforce this volatility. Relative to his career baselines, Young's jump-shot efficiency fluctuates year to year (Figure 2), while his floater game remains a stable source of value. He is not a plug-and-play scorer; his efficiency depends on a spacing environment around him.
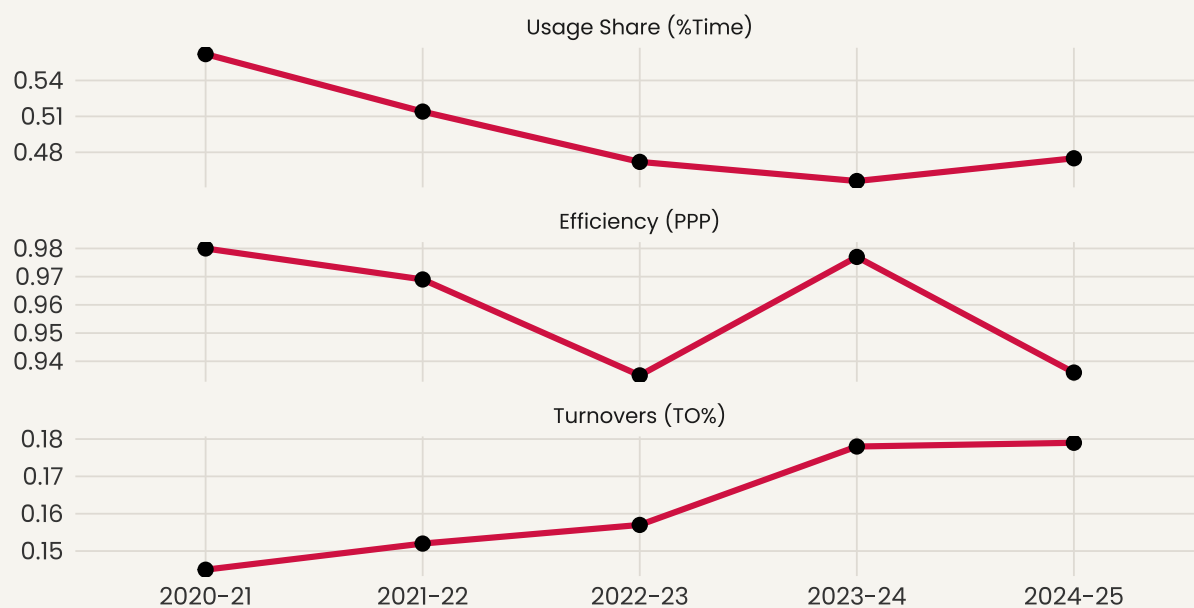
Play-Type Portfolio

Table 3: Trae Young Play-Type Profile (2020–21 to 2024–25 | Source: Synergy/SportsRadar)

play_type	Seasons	Poss	Avg %Time	Avg PPP	Avg TO%	Avg 3P%
P&R Ball Handler	5	4480	49.9%	0.958	16.1%	37.4%
Transition	5	1444	16.3%	0.980	19.4%	35.6%
Isolation	5	1097	12.8%	0.945	9.4%	29.5%
Spot Up	5	717	8.2%	1.099	6.0%	40.4%
Misc Plays	5	533	5.9%	0.893	34.7%	21.1%
Handoffs	5	429	5.3%	0.860	14.9%	27.1%

Young's offensive ecosystem is dominated by pick-and-roll ball handling. Over the five-season sample, P&R possessions account for roughly half of his tracked usage, far outweighing any other play type (Table 3). This concentration explains why roster fit is fundamentally a pick-and-roll problem rather than a general scoring one.
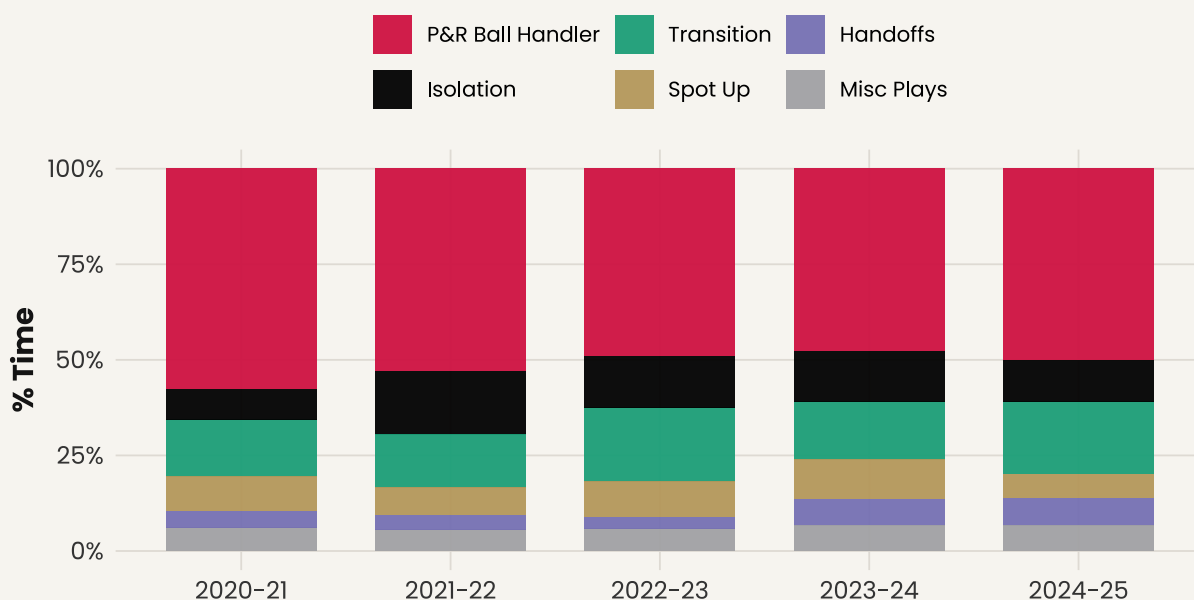
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Trae Young P&R Ball Handler Trend

How he has played out of his signature play-type over the years

Usage Share (%Time)

Efficiency (PPP)

Turnovers (TO%)

Source: Synergy/SportsRadar | Viz: @Rambzee_

Trae Young Play-Type Usage Over Time

% of possessions by Synergy play type

- P&R Ball Handler
- Transition
- Handoffs
- Isolation
- Spot Up
- Misc Plays

Source: Synergy/SportsRadar | Viz: @Rambzee_

While the volume of P&R usage has remained stable, efficiency and turnover rates within that play type have fluctuated season-over-season. Young's usage is intentionally concentrated around early advantage creation, placing a premium on lineups that can finish possessions effectively.

Structural Weaknesses

Table 4: Trae Young On–Off Impact, 2020–21 through 2024–25 (Low-Leverage Removed)

Metric	On	Off	On-Off
Offensive Rating	118.1	112.0	6.2
Defensive Rating	117.7	114.5	3.1
Net Rating	0.4	-2.6	3.0
Team TS%	58.9	55.8	3.1
Turnover Rate%	13.3	14.1	-0.8
Offensive REB%	27.2	26.5	0.7

On–off data captures the tradeoff clearly: Young lifts offensive efficiency, but much of that gain is offset defensively (Table 4), leaving narrow net margins even when the offense performs well.

Table 5: Trae Young Crafted Offensive Metrics (Percentiles vs NBA Guards)

Stat	Value	Percentile
True Shooting%	57.2%	**50**
Shot Quality (SQ)	68.3	**84**
Free Throw Rate	46.8%	**95**
3P Attempt Rate	45.4%	**54**
Offensive Rebounds	1.4	**65**
Careless TOV%	8.2%	**57**
Offensive Load	64.7	**99**
Creation	14.9	**99**
Portability	6.4	**73**
Passer Rating	90.1	**98**
Crafted OPM	3.5	**97**

Table 6: Trae Young Crafted Defensive Metrics (Percentiles vs NBA Guards)

Stat	Value	Percentile
Deflections	1.7	**25**
Disruptive TOs (raDTOV)	0.5	**83**
Defensive Rebounds	-1.8	**3**
Versatility	21.3	**27**
Personal Fouls (rPF)	-0.7	**84**
Crafted DPM	-2.7	**0**

The CraftedNBA profile quantifies this imbalance. Young grades as an elite creator with extreme offensive load and passing value, ranking near the top of the league offensively (Table 5). Defensively, he remains a consistent liability (Table 6). While his activity has improved in recent seasons, particularly in passing lanes, physical limitations cap his defensive impact.

As a result, teams built around Young must win structurally. Defensive insulation, shooting volume, and secondary creation are requirements.

What Trae Provides

What you are buying

- Elite primary playmaking
- Pick-and-roll orchestration
- Shot-quality elevation for teammates
- Late-clock offensive organization

What must be supplied

- Point-of-attack and rim protection
- High-volume, high-accuracy shooting
- A secondary creator to relieve possession pressure

Team Context: Toronto Raptors

Scottie Barnes - Two-Way Hub and Backbone

Scottie Barnes is instantly the most complete two-way partner Trae Young has ever played with. Offensively, he pairs high offensive load (42.6, 88th percentile), strong creation (87th percentile), and elite portability (91st percentile) with league-average efficiency. Defensively, he grades as a high-impact, multi-positional presence, ranking in the 87th percentile in CraftedDPM with strong rim activity, elite versatility, and disciplined fouling.

Barnes' defensive range is critical. His ability to switch, rotate, and provide interior support allows Toronto to absorb Young's point-of-attack limitations without extreme schematic concessions. Offensively, Young simplifies Barnes' role into a consistent connective hub; defensively, Barnes stabilizes the structure behind him.

Brandon Ingram - Shot-Making Relief

Brandon Ingram takes on sustained creation responsibility, ranking in the 88th percentile in offensive load and 86th percentile in creation. While his efficiency sits near league average, his defensive impact is often overlooked; Ingram grades as a strong secondary rim presence, ranking in the 80th percentile in rim defense while providing length on the wing.

Next to Young, Ingram's value scales on both ends. Trae absorbs primary initiation, allowing Ingram to attack advantages more often, rather than manufacture them, while his length and rim support help reduce backline stress and offset the defensive tradeoffs inherent to Trae-led lineups.

RJ Barrett - Physical Wing Defense and Downhill Pressure

RJ Barrett brings a level of physicality often absent from Trae Young–led lineups. Offensively, he applies consistent rim pressure, reflected in a strong free-throw rate (31.5%, 76th percentile) while carrying a high offensive load (43.6, 89th percentile). Defensively, he provides real wing size and activity, ranking in the 77th percentile in rim defense with solid rebounding impact.

In a Trae-centered offense, that defensive value scales. With Young handling primary creation, Barrett can conserve energy for matchups, rebounding, and help defense, allowing his physical tools to offset some of Trae's point-of-attack limitations rather than adding to them.

Collin Murray-Boyles - Defensive Event Creation and Offensive Containment

Even in his rookie season, Murray-Boyles is already a disruptive defensive piece, ranking in the 93rd percentile in deflections and the 79th percentile in passing-lane turnovers. Offensively, his inefficiency is largely

developmental, driven by low shot quality (36.6, 18th percentile) and a high careless turnover rate (11.9%, 11th percentile).

Alongside Trae Young, Murray-Boyles can focus on screening, cutting, and offensive rebounding while sustaining defensive pressure. His ability to generate defensive events helps offset possessions Trae cannot consistently contest.

Jamal Shead - Point-of-Attack Defense and Guard Depth

Jamal Shead's defensive pressure is tailor-made to coexist with Trae Young. He ranks in the 97th percentile in disruptive turnovers and the 75th percentile in deflections, giving Toronto a true point-of-attack defender to deploy against elite guards. Offensively, Shead struggles when tasked with primary creation but thrives as a as a connecting piece

With Young on the floor, Shead's defensive value is unlocked. Trae handles offensive orchestration, while Shead absorbs the toughest defensive assignments, preserving lineup balance and insulating Young from his most damaging matchups.

Why This Works Structurally

Toronto is uniquely positioned to absorb Trae Young's defensive limitations. Barnes provides switchability and backline organization, Ingram and Barrett add size and rim support on the wings, Murray-Boyles and Shead generate defensive events, and Young centralizes offensive creation. This is a structurally sound Raptors team, as they can trade defensive responsibility across multiple positions while allowing Trae to do what he does best: run the offense.