NBA Over Under

1. Atlanta Hawks O/U: 43.5

I am going just under at **41** wins. I like the addition of Howard as it improves one of their biggest weaknesses which is rebounding. The loss of Al Horford will be huge and I don’t trust Dennis Schroeder yet as he can be erratic and inconsistent. This will be a solid team this year, Millsap should have another great year and Korver will improve, I just don’t see the depth and playmaking on this roster to say they are an above .500 team.

1. Boston Celtics O/U: 51.5

I am surprisingly under at **49** wins. Sounds crazy right? They added Al Horford, Jaylen Brown and have a very deep roster with several perimeter defenders. With that being said, I have major questions about their offense which relies heavily on Isaiah Thomas and while the Horford addition helps, they still don’t have enough playmaking in my eyes to warrant a 50+ win season. I certainly understand the optimism but I think people are underestimating the lack of offensive options on this team

1. Brooklyn Nets O/U: 20.5

I am going over on the Brooklyn Nets! I have them at **22** wins simply because I think they have nothing to tank for and Jeremy Lin and Brook Lopez are too good to be sub-20 wins. No doubt, this is the most anti-league-pass team in the NBA, but I think they have veterans who will find a way to win some games. With that all said, the future is still very dim in Brooklyn as the Nets will again owe their pick to the Celtics this year (yes, still from that KG-Pierce trade)

1. Charlotte Hornets O/U:39.5

I am going comfortable over with the Hornets at **43** wins. So they lost Jeremy Lin, Courtney Lee and bring back Kidd-Gilchrist, Batum and Marvin Williams and they got 8 games worse? Last year’s 48 wins may have been a slight aberration but this team is still very good. They will have a solid defense again this year and they added Roy Hibbert for rim protection. Kemba Walker should be an all-star this year and if they get production from Batum and a healthy MKG, this is a definite playoff team

1. Chicago Bulls O/U:38.5

This was tough for me because while my initial reaction this summer was that this team was a disaster, they are slightly growing on me. I will take the slight over at **40** wins for the Bulls this year. Yes, there is no spacing and yes Wade and Rondo is a horrendous backcourt defense but this team is too talented to be that bad on either end. I look for Jimmy Butler to have an MVP type season and if Mirotic, McDermott and Portis can provide enough spacing, I think this team will miss the playoffs but be around the .500 mark.

1. Cleveland Cavaliers O/U:56.5

The narrative last year was that the Cavs would coast in the regular season and be around 50 wins. They did coast and dealt with major injuries to Kyrie Irving and still managed to get 57 wins in the eastern conference. This is an easy over for me and I have them at **58** wins. I do think this team has motivation to compete with Golden State in the regular season, and while I don’t think that’s possible, this could tack on a few extra wins for the Cavs. The fear with this pick is that the Cavs lock up the 1-seed early and rest players but I think the Celtics and Raptors will be good enough to prevent that.

1. Dallas Mavericks O/U:39.5

This team won 42 games last year and while the West did get better, to me this is an easy over and I’m sticking with the same **40** wins as last year. Rick Carlisle always seems to get the best out of his players and I think he will get Harrison Barnes and Andrew Bogut playing well for the Mavs this year. Dirk should be his usual self and another year of recovery for Wesley Matthews after the Achilles injury, a healthy Deron Williams and Seth Curry should have this team in the playoff hunt

1. Denver Nuggets O/U:34.5

This might be my boldest pick but I am all in on the nuggets this year. I have them way over at **44** wins which might sound crazy but this team has a lot of talent. They are two-deep at each position and although there is no superstar, they have a bunch of solid players. I like the combination of Mudiay, Murray and Harris in the backcourt and Chandler, Gallinari on the wing if they can stay healthy. Jokic and Nurkic look great in the preseason and if they can hold up defensively watch out for this team because they will be exciting and they can put points up in a hurry

1. Detroit Pistons O/U: 45.5  
   I am going under on the Pistons at **43** wins. I think the Reggie Jackson Injury really hurts them and while I do think they will be better simply from a continuity standpoint, I like some of the East teams better which affects my projection. I am not as high on Drummond as most and I really feel that he is overrated given his production and effort. I like what they did on their bench getting Ish Smith but I still don’t see enough on the wing to get me to 46 wins. However, if Tobias Harris and Stanley Johnson improve, this tema could easily hit 48 wins.
2. Golden State Warriors O/U:66.5

This is another easy over for me, and I have the warriors for **70** wins. The narrative this year is that they won’t go for 73 wins because it didn’t work out last year which I disagree with. I think it was great that they went for it and I think that despite not having the motivation to get 70 wins, I think they will stumble into that number with their talent. It is simply amazing what this team could do, essentially having an MVP on the floor for the whole game and throwing out a 5-man lineup of Igoudala, Curry, Thompson ,Durant and Green. I also believe that Durant will want to experience a historic regular season himself which might push the Warriors to more wins.

1. Houston Rockets: O/U:41.5

Last year the Rockets won 41 games and added Ryan Anderson and Eric Gordon. Both of these additions are good offensive players, horrible defensive players and always get injured. I am going slightly over at **42** wins but like most people, I really believe that their defense will be horrible. THe argument for a 45+ win season is that offense is more important in the regular season and they can simply outscore teams. However, besides Beverly and Ariza, there is not another average defender on this roster. The positive is that they know their identity and they brought in a perfect coach for James Harden who should be an MVP candidate. I think they are a top 3 offense but a bottom 10 defense and that is about a .500 team.

1. Indiana Pacers: O/U: 43.5

There is a lot of hype around this team with some thinking they are a conference finalist. I am a lot lower on their offseason than most and I have them at **44** wins. This is mainly because I think George Hill is extremely underrated and is an amazing defender which I got an up close look at in their first round series against the Raptors. The Pacers defense will take a step back as they lost the aforementioned Hill, Mahinmi and Frank Vogel. I am not a Jeff Teague fan as he is inconsistent on offense and an Ellis-Teague backcourt will really struggle on defense given their size. With all that being said, Paul George is the second best player in the conference and was so good in the playoffs last year that it seems that he can carry them to 45 wins by himself.

1. Los Angeles Clippers: O/U: 53.5

I am going slightly over with a projected record of **54**-28 which I am pretty comfortable with. Everyone knows this team pretty well, 3 max players in Paul, Griffin and Jordan and a great shooter in J.J. Redick. The bench should be better with Raymond Felton and Brandon Bass but losing Cole Aldrich inside will be a loss. I am looking forward to an MVP season for Blake Griffin after an embarrassing incident last year in Toronto. In my eyes he is the best power forward in the game and if he has a healthy year, this team should hit 54 wins easily.

1. Los Angeles Lakers: O/U: 24.5

I’m going under at **22** wins for the Lakers this year and I feel alone on the fact that I don’t love their future. I am a big D’Angelo Russell fan but other than that I don’t see another future all-star on this team. Brandon Ingram seems like a solid starter but I don’t see anything more than that and Julius Randle can’t shoot or defend and that’s not good for a big in today’s game. At least they got a coach in Luke Walton who will have them playing hard and finally the Kobe tour is over so look for this team to be a lot better but it won’t show too much in their record

1. Memphis Grizzlies: O/U:43.5

I have the Grizzlies under at **40** wins but I am not feeling to goods about this one. Chandler Parsons is one of the most overrated players in the league and besides shooting and a bit of playmaking, I don’t think he provides much on the court. It might take Gasol and Conley some time to recover after their injuries and if so this team will struggle to score. However, I like the move of bring Z-Bo off the bench and they should still have a top 7 defense and if they can get a full and productive season out of Parsons, this could be a playoff team

1. Miami Heat: O/U:36.5

I am going over with a record of **40**-42. That seems high for a team that lost Wade, Bosh, Deng and Joe Johnson and it looks like they will struggle to score but I think this team will be good defensively. Justise Winslow will be able to spread his wings and Goran Dragic and Hassan Whiteside should be dynamic in the pick and roll. This is one of my surprise picks because I think this team will be scrappy and I could see them having a .500 record at the all-star break and everyone will wonder how that’s possible with such little talent. The power forward position is a gaping hole and it seems like James Johnson will be starting. However, I think their defense and effort will get them to 40 wins.

1. Milwaukee Bucks: O/U:39.5

I have this team for **30** wins and while the Khris Middleton injury will be a massive loss, I think this is the year that Giannis takes a huge leap. If he has an all-star year and Jabari Parker takes a leap, this team should have enough scoring and defense to be around .500. I think adding Dellavedova and Tony Snell shores up the loss of Middleton for the time being and with Point Giannis in full effect, I couldn’t think of a better guard for him than Delly. The big men position is concerning given that they just invested 50 million in to Miles Plumlee and the Greg Monroe signing has been a disaster. That’s what I think will hold them back from making the playoffs this year

1. Minnesota Timberwolves: O/U:41.5

This is the trendy pick to make a huge leap from 29 wins last year and I am all in. I have the wolves for **48** wins this year! Karl-Anthony Towns is the future of the NBA and I always laugh when they ask Davis or Towns because Towns is stronger, has better moves in the post and is an overall better offensive player. Adding Tom Thibodeau will make players with tons of potential on defense in Wiggins and Lavine into way better defenders. I love the Rubio and Dunn combo at the point and Cole Aldrich, Towns and Dieng is a great front court. If they can get enough shooting from Brandon Rush, Nemanja Bjelica and Wiggins, this is a 50 win team but for now I have them for 48.

1. New Orleans Pelicans: O/U:36.5

I am going just under at **35** wins. This team simply lacks talent in all areas including point guard, center and the wings. There are way too many injuries on this team and I really think they will struggle to score and defend. Now for my unpopular take in saying Anthony Davis is the most overrated player in the league. Yes he puts up good numbers but I can’t believe that people are willing to put him in the top 10 players in the NBA when he can’t create his own shot. That is a prerequisite for an elite player and when he scores it’s either off a pick and pop, alley oop or face up jumper. The obvious response is well, how did he score 59 points in a game?? Go back and watch the highlights, he got red hot from midrange and that’s all he has on offense besides catching alley-oops.

1. New York Knicks: O/U:38.5

This is an obvious under to me and I have them for **36** wins. This team might have one of the worst benches in the NBA. While the Knicks crowd loves Brandon Jennings, he is erratic and has horrible shot selection and that’s about it off the bench. I love Kristaps Porzingis and Carmelo Anthony, but Rose will be bad on offense and defense and Noah can’t score with a pencil. Besides health issues, this team simply won’t be good enough on either end of the floor to make the playoffs or come close to the playoffs

1. Oklahoma City Thunder: O/U:45.5

This to me is a perfect over/under and I have them right at **45** wins. The obvious strengths of this team are rebounding with Adams and Kanter as well as the force of nature that is Russell Westbrook. I cannot wait to see how he plays this year but I am a bit concerned that he might be wild and will be inefficient like he was in 2014-15. I don’t love the fit with Oladipo in the backcourt but I still think this team has the size and length to be a 45 win team and grab a playoff spot in the West.

1. Orlando Magic: O/U:36.5

I am going under on the Magic with **34** wins. This is the anti-Rockets as they could have a top 5 defense and a bottom 10 offense. This team is littered with defensive starpower in Ibaka, Biyombo and Aaron Gordon. The problem for Frank Vogel will be in deciding which bigs to play with Vucevic in the mix as well as who can score on this team? Elfrid Payton is a huge question mark and besides Fournier, there is no shooting on this team. This team is tough to predict because if they put it all together, they could be great defensively and get by on offense but otherwise they could be a 30-win team averaging 90 points per game.

1. Philadelphia 76ers: O/U: 25

I am going under with **15** wins for the 76ers and I am a bit shocked with this line at 25. The 76ers will be way more exiciting this year and even after the Ben Simmons injury, they still have Joel Embiid to look forward to and that will be a lot of fun as he could be the face of the franchise. With that being said, lets remember they won 10 games last year, 10 games! Doubling your wins even with that performance last year is hard but I think adding point guards Jeryd Bayless and Sergio Rodriguez will be huge upgrades and I think they will be a tough matchup with their effort and improved talent

1. Phoenix Suns: O/U: 26.5

I am going with an easy over of **28** wins for the Phoenix Suns because this team has a lot of talent and great guard play with Booker, Bledose and Knight. I like the idea of Knight coming off the bench and I think he will be perfect in the Jamal Craword role on this team and I look for Marquise Chriss to be impactful this year as well. I like the mix of veterans and young players and signing Jared Dudley for 30 million/3 years is a steal. If they can get a good season out of centers Alex Len and Tyson Chandler, they can easily hit 30 wins.

1. Portland Trailblazers: O/U:46.5

This was the big surprise team of last year and I think they will have another great season with **46** wins this year. For me it’s hard to imagine the Blazers getting to 47+ wins because they will have a league-average defense which comes with their elite offense. While their offseason resulted in a lot of money spent, I like most of the moves they made and they retained a lot of their young players. As much as I hated the Evan Turner signing, it’s growing on me and I like the argument that the Blazers need someone to relieve Lillard and McCollum of their ball-handling duties at times. I look for Lillard to have a big season and hopefully McCollum will continue his amazing season from last year. If their big men in Plumlee, Leonard, Davis and Ezeli if healthy plays well, this could be a 4-seed in the West

1. Sacramento Kings: O/U:32.5

This to me is a perennial **30**-win team no matter who they add in the offseason. This year the big concern is Rudy Gay and the point guard situation. Ty Lawson does not seem like the answer and there is once again disaster potential with the Kings as Rudy Gay has reportedly told the team he will not resign this summer. This team is going backwards with 6 bigs and no point guards which is perplexing given they didn’t need another big with an all-star in Cousins. While the Afflalo and Barnes additions are solid, they won’t get the Kings into the playoff hunt

1. San Antonio Spurs: O/U:56.5

Is this team really 11 games worse than last year’s amazing 67 wins? I think so given the loss of Tim Duncan, Boris Diaw and David West. I didn’t love the acquisitions of Gasol and Lee which leads me to be concerned about their defense this year. They will likely start 3 below-average defenders in Parker, Gasol and Aldridge which will be tough to correct even with Kawhi Leonard on the floor. The Spurs will still be really good and should be a great team on both sides of the ball even if they are not as great as last year. I have them for **56** wins.

1. Toronto Raptors: O/U:49.5

As a lifelong Raptors fan, this is probably the least hype I’ve season for a Raptors season which is odd given they won a franchise-record 56 wins and made it to the conference finals. We simply know what this team is, an elite offense with two all-stars in the backcourt and a deep bench along with Valanciunas in the post. The loss of Bismack Biyombo will be huge especially with the Lowry and bench lineup that won the Raptors a ton of games last year. I like Poeltl but I think the Sullinger acquisition was pointless given his defensive concerns especially if you pair him with JV in the frontcourt. I still really like the depth of this team and a bench of Cory Joseph, Norman Powell and Terrence Ross has the potential to be an elite bench this year and will help the Raptors win a lot of games so I am going over at **51** wins.

1. Utah Jazz: O/U:47.5

This is the team that gets a lot of the hype from NBA twitter conversations and a lot of the off-season talk was about this team which hasn’t happened in a while. I absolutely loved the George Hill trade for the Jazz because they filled the biggest void on the team and only gave up the 12th pick. Favors and Gobert should be monsters this year and I expect big seasons for Hayward and Rodney Hood. With all that being said, I think this is the most overrated team in the preseason because I still have concerns about their ability to score. They still don’t have a go-to option and they will struggle to score with not enough shooting on the floor to play two bigs. I am down on their offense and that’s why I am picking them to win **42** games because I think they need to learn how to make the playoffs before becoming a consensus 4-seed in the West

1. Washington Wizards: O/U:42.5

I like this Wizards team and I feel they are getting a bit underrated based on their offseason and health issues. When this team was healthy, they made it to the second round two years in a row and have one of the best backcourts in the game. While the quotes from the summer about their chemistry is concerning, if they can stay on the court, the Wizards will make the playoffs. If Otto Porter and and Gortat play well, this team could pull an upset in the first round if they don’t get a high seed in the Playoffs. I have them at 42 wins.