Devmountain Specialization Capstone Project: The New Look Utah Jazz

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Overview

In April 2022, the Utah Jazz lost their first round playoff series vs the Dallas Mavericks. It was their sixth consecutive year making the playoffs, but they had never gotten to the semi-finals. Although the team was incredibly talented, led by stars Donovan Mitchell and Rudy Gobert, this seemed to be the breaking point.

Overview

On June 5, 2022, longtime Jazz head coach Quin Snyder resigned.

Overview

After his resignation, the teardown began.

-June 30, 2022: Royce O'Neale traded to Brooklyn Nets

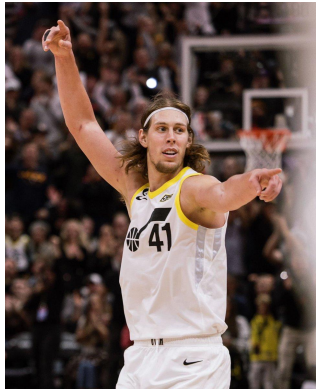-July 29, 2022: Rudy Gobert traded to Minnesota Timberwolves

-September 1, 2022: Donovan Mitchell traded to Cleveland Cavaliers

-September 22, 2022: Bojan Bogdanovic traded to Detroit Pistons

Overview

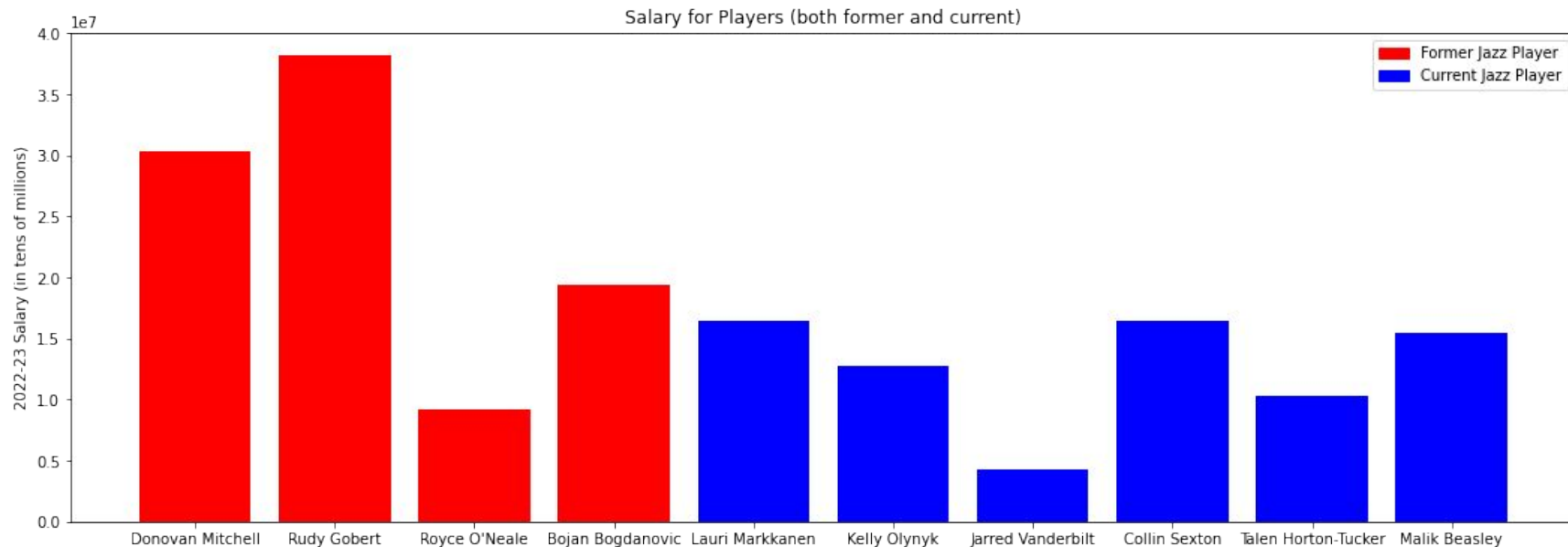In return, the Jazz received a plethora of new players and draft picks.

Questions

- How have the new players performed vs the old players?
- What are the new players better performers at?
- What are some non-playing factors that might have influenced this decision?
- What can we learn from the statistics that might project future success?

Salary Comparison

Salary Comparison

-Former Jazz Average 2022-23 Salary: **$24,266,799**

-New Jazz Average 2022-23 Salary: **$12,636,395**

-Former Jazz Total 2022-23 Salary: **$97,067,194** (4 players)

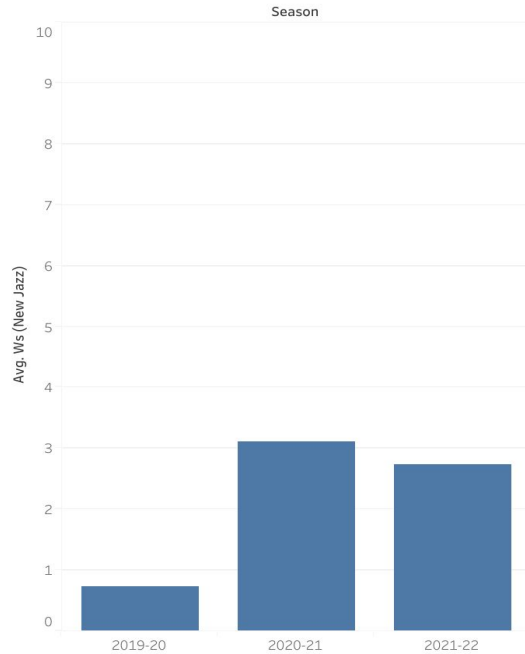-New Jazz Total 2022-23 Salary: **$75,818,367** (6 players)

Age Comparison

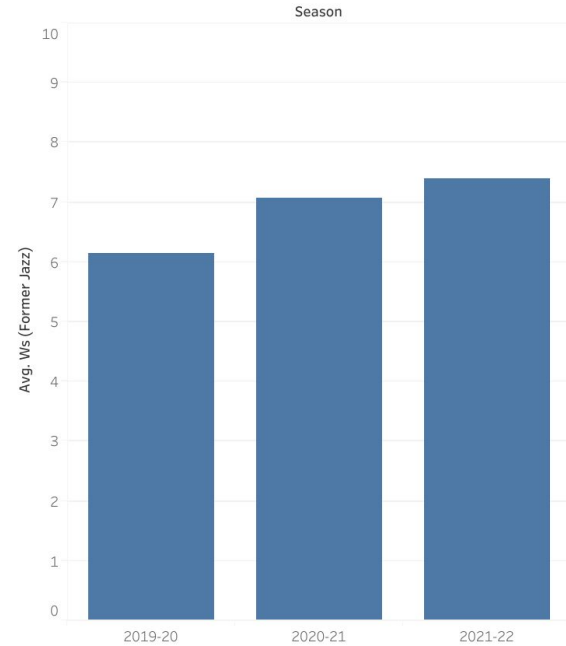-Former Jazz Average Age (Mitchell, Gobert, O'Neale, Bogdanovic): **29.5**

-New Jazz Average Age (Markkanen, Olynyk, Vanderbilt, Sexton, Horton-Tucker, Beasley): **24.7**

Statistics Comparisons

Average Win Shares for New Jazz Players
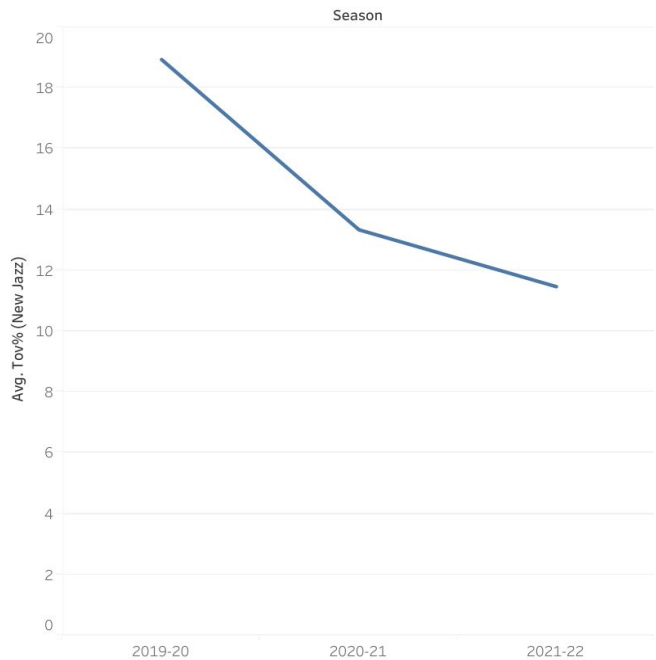(2019-2022)

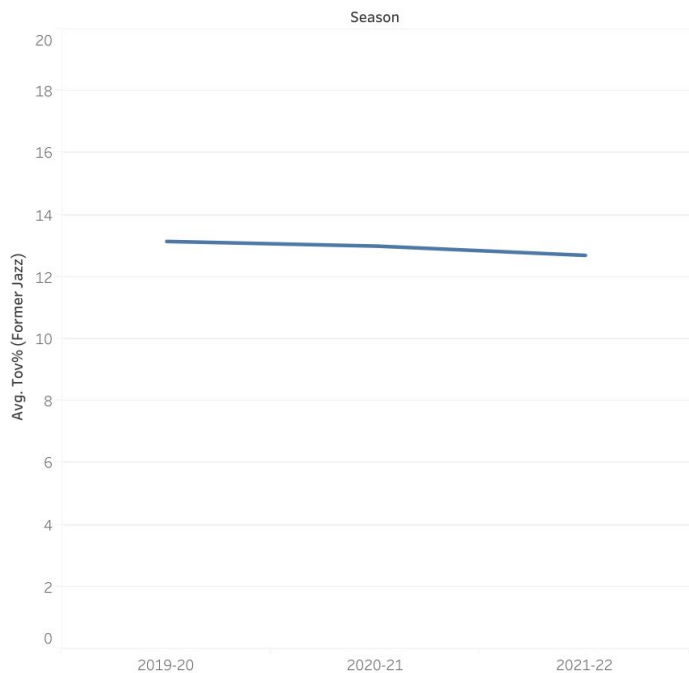Average Win Shares for Former Jazz Players
(2019-2022)

Statistics Comparisons

Average Turnover Percentage for New Jazz Players
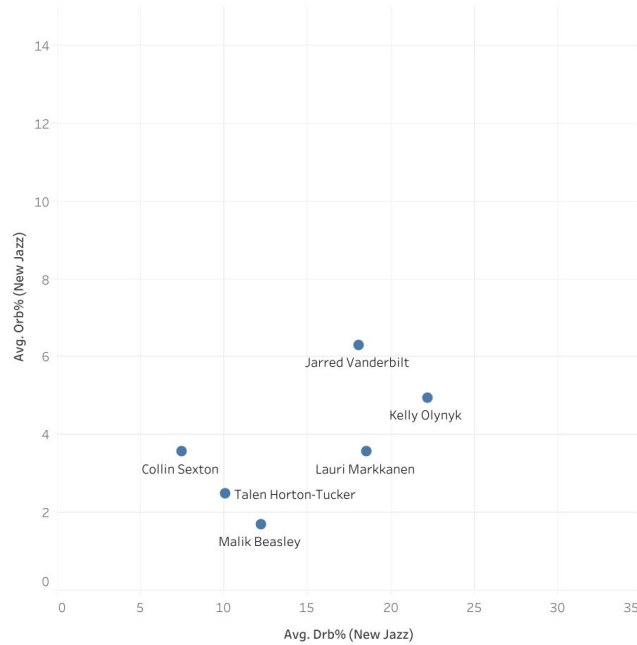(2019-2022)

Average Turnover Percentage for Former Jazz Players
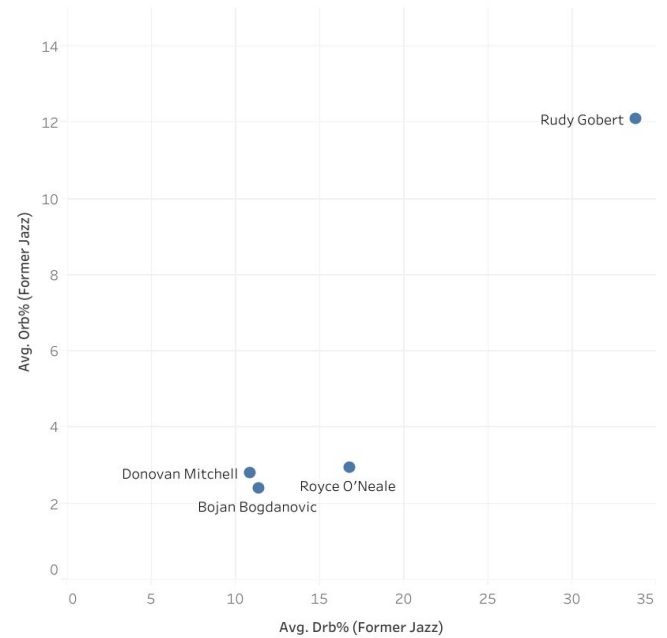(2019-2022)

Statistics Comparisons

Average Offensive and Defensive Rebounding % for New Jazz Players (2019-2022)

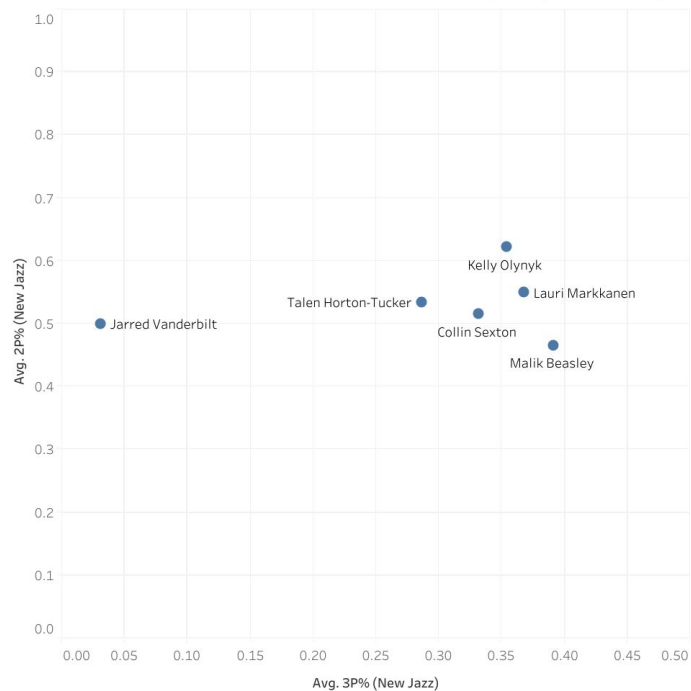

Average Offensive and Defensive Rebounding % for Former Jazz Players (2019-2022)
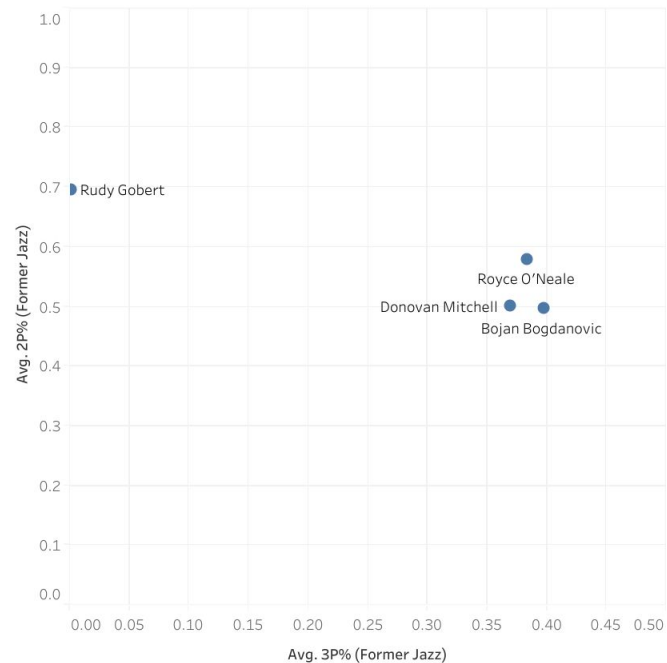
Statistics Comparisons

Average 2pt FG % and 3pt FG% for New Jazz Players (2019-2022)

Average 2pt FG % and 3pt FG% for Former Jazz Players (2019-2022)

Statistics Comparisons

Overall, the former Jazz players performed much better in the 2019-2022 seasons. In the 42 statistics measured, the former Jazz players performed better in 38 of them.

Draft Picks

Along with the players the Jazz acquired, the Jazz also received draft picks which they can use to select incoming players in the NBA draft.
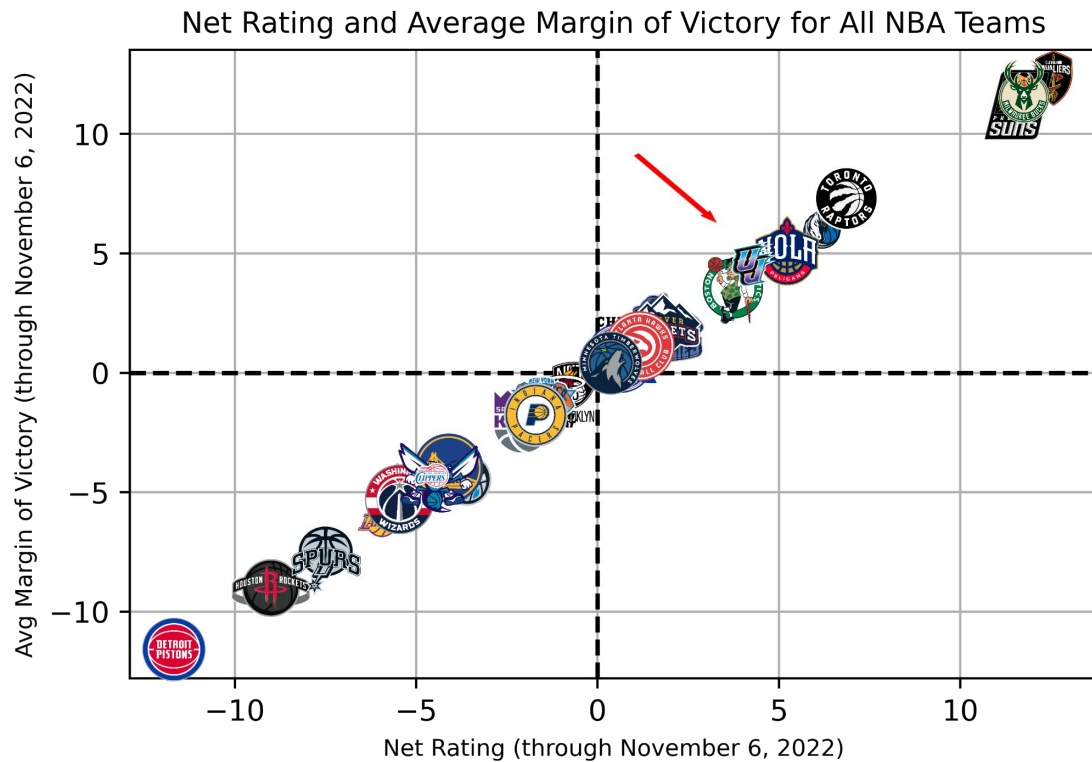
Draft Picks Received from Trades:

- 2023 1st Round - from HOU, BKN, or PHI (O'Neale)
- 2023 1st Round - from MIN (Gobert)
- 2025 1st Round - from MIN (Gobert)
- 2025 1st Round - from CLE (Mitchell)
- 2026 1st Round - from MIN (Gobert)
- 2027 1st Round - from MIN (Gobert)
- 2027 1st Round - from CLE (Mitchell)
- 2029 1st Round - from MIN (Gobert)
- 2029 1st Round - from CLE (Mitchell)

Early Returns

With the 2022-23 NBA Season starting in mid October, we have seen a surprisingly good Jazz team. As of November 7th, the team is 9-3.

Early Returns

Net Rating and Average Margin of Victory for All NBA Teams

Early Returns

Through 11 games, the new Jazz have improved from their 2019-2022 seasons in 32 of the 42 statistics measured.

Further Questions

- What are the specific factors that may be leading to early success?
- How does a difference in coaching factor into the player's statistics?
- What is the impact of the players who played with both versions of the team? (M. Conley, J. Clarkson)

Conclusion

The Jazz lacked resources and financial space with Mitchell and Gobert, and it was going to be nearly impossible to win a championship with that core. Trading their star players gives the Jazz the ability to spend money on other players, draft new players, and get younger as a team. While the group they have now might not perform as well on their own compared to the last group, the addition of resources will propel the Jazz forward in the future. We may already be seeing improvements.

Conclusion

Player/Team statistics provided by **basketball-reference.com**

Salary statistics provided by **spotrac.com**

Analysis Applications Used: Jupyter Notebooks, Pandas (Python), Scipy

Visualization Applications Used: Tableau, Matplotlib, Seaborn