

FANTASY

## NBA Fantasy: Bounce-back players for 2025-26

These players could be primed for not only a bounce-back season but a career campaign in 2025-26.

Kirien Sprecher, RotoWire.com

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Tyrese Maxey finished 60th in total fantasy points for the 2024-25 season.



If you want to believe in guys like [Joel Embiid](#), [Kawhi Leonard](#), [Zion Williamson](#), [Paul George](#), [Brandon Ingram](#) and [Kristaps Porziņģis](#) again, go right ahead. All of which are

fantasy stars on the court but have been plagued by injuries. They should definitely be considered for bounce back campaigns. However, for this article I shifted my focus to younger players who were injured last season and could break out for career campaigns in 2025-26.

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## **LaMelo Ball, Charlotte Hornets**

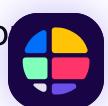
Ball has played more than 51 games only once in his career, and he's on the edge of falling into the Embiid/Leonard/Williamson category. Ball is only one year younger than Williamson, so it may not seem fair to judge them so differently. But, for me, it's simple. Ball has top-five upside, and Williamson doesn't, making the All-Star point guard still worth the risk. Ball has never played on a team built for success. You could argue Williamson hasn't either, but despite all his missed games, the Pelicans have made the playoffs twice since he was drafted. Ball spent the summer rehabbing from wrist and ankle surgeries but is expected to be healthy for training camp and will have an upgraded supporting cast, a recipe for success. Ball would be my favorite for a bounce-back award in 2025-26 (if such award existed).

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## **Jalen Johnson, Atlanta Hawks**

Johnson has also never been healthy in his career, even going back to his Duke days. However, like LaMelo and unlike the oft-injured vets mentioned in the intro, I don't think Johnson has reached his peak yet, and it'll just take one healthy season for that to happen. Before a torn labrum ended his 2024-25 campaign, Johnson averaged 18.9 points, 10.0 rebounds, 5.0 assists, 1.5 steals, 1.0 blocks and 1.2 3-pointers while posting 50/31/75 shooting splits. Even if he never improves his efficiency from deep or at the free-throw line, Johnson's ability to contribute across the board makes him a top option for the next decade if he can stay on the court.





## Paolo Banchero, Orlando Magic

After two healthy campaigns to start his career, Banchero and the Magic were bitten by the injury bug last season. He has steadily improved his counting stats across the board since his rookie campaign but hasn't taken great strides with his efficiency, posting 45/32/73 shooting splits last season. Orlando made it a priority to add floor spacers this offseason, drafting [Jase Richardson](#) and trading for [Desmond Bane](#), which should open up more room for Banchero to operate. The Eastern Conference was weakened by a trio of Achilles injuries during the postseason, and the Magic are one of the favorites to jump into the top tier. For that to happen, Banchero needs to put himself in the MVP conversation.

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### [Tyrese Maxey](#), Philadelphia 76ers

### [Jalen Suggs](#), Orlando Magic

### [Jaden Ivey](#), Detroit Pistons

### [Brandon Miller](#), Charlotte Hornets

I couldn't pick just one from this group, and they share similarities, so I decided to throw them together. All four players have shown flashes of stardom, were injured for most of last season and will return to teams that look a bit different than the last time they suited up. If they play well, all four will re-establish themselves as go-to players and could potentially reach their fantasy peaks. However, the pressure is on while playing for contenders who've added their potential replacements.

Maxey will be pestered by [Jared McCain](#), [Quentin Grimes](#) and [VJ Edgecombe](#). Ivey will try to fend off [Caris LeVert](#) and [Duncan Robinson](#). Miller will compete for usage with newcomers [Kon Knueppel](#), [Collin Sexton](#) and [Spencer Dinwiddie](#). Suggs falls to fourth in the offensive pecking order behind Desmond Bane, [Franz Wagner](#) and Banchero, while Jase Richardson and [Tyus Jones](#) will nip at Suggs' heels for playing time. Injury isn't the only concern for Maxey, Ivey, Miller and Suggs, but there is enough trending in their favor to be in consideration for massive bounce-back campaigns in 2025-26.



## Honorable Mention



### Anfernee Simons, Boston Celtics

Unlike the rest of the players mentioned in this list, Simons played most of last season and had a career year, at least from a category-league perspective. However, he switched uniforms this offseason, and despite joining a team that finished a lot higher in the standings than the Trail Blazers, Simons is actually looking at more usage with his new squad. [Jayson Tatum](#) will miss time in the 2025-26 campaign after tearing his Achilles during the playoffs, while [Jrue Holiday](#) and Kristaps Porziņģis were traded away to shed cap space. That leaves Simons to battle [Jaylen Brown](#), [Derrick White](#) and [Payton Pritchard](#) atop the Celtics' offensive totem pole. Simons doesn't fit the theme of this article exactly, but if he plays in 70-plus games, shoots close to 40 percent from deep and is a lead playmaker for Boston, it wouldn't be shocking to see him finish inside the Top 50 for the first time in his career.

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