



BREAKING NEWS

Stein: Nets expected to sign Igor Kokoskov, who's close to both Steve Nash and Goran Dragic, as an assistant coach

LATEST NEWS

# Nets: Ben Simmons back surgery in L.A. 'successful,' expect him 'fully recovered' by camp

By Net Income | May 5, 2022, 2:36pm EDT | 83 Comments

SHARE

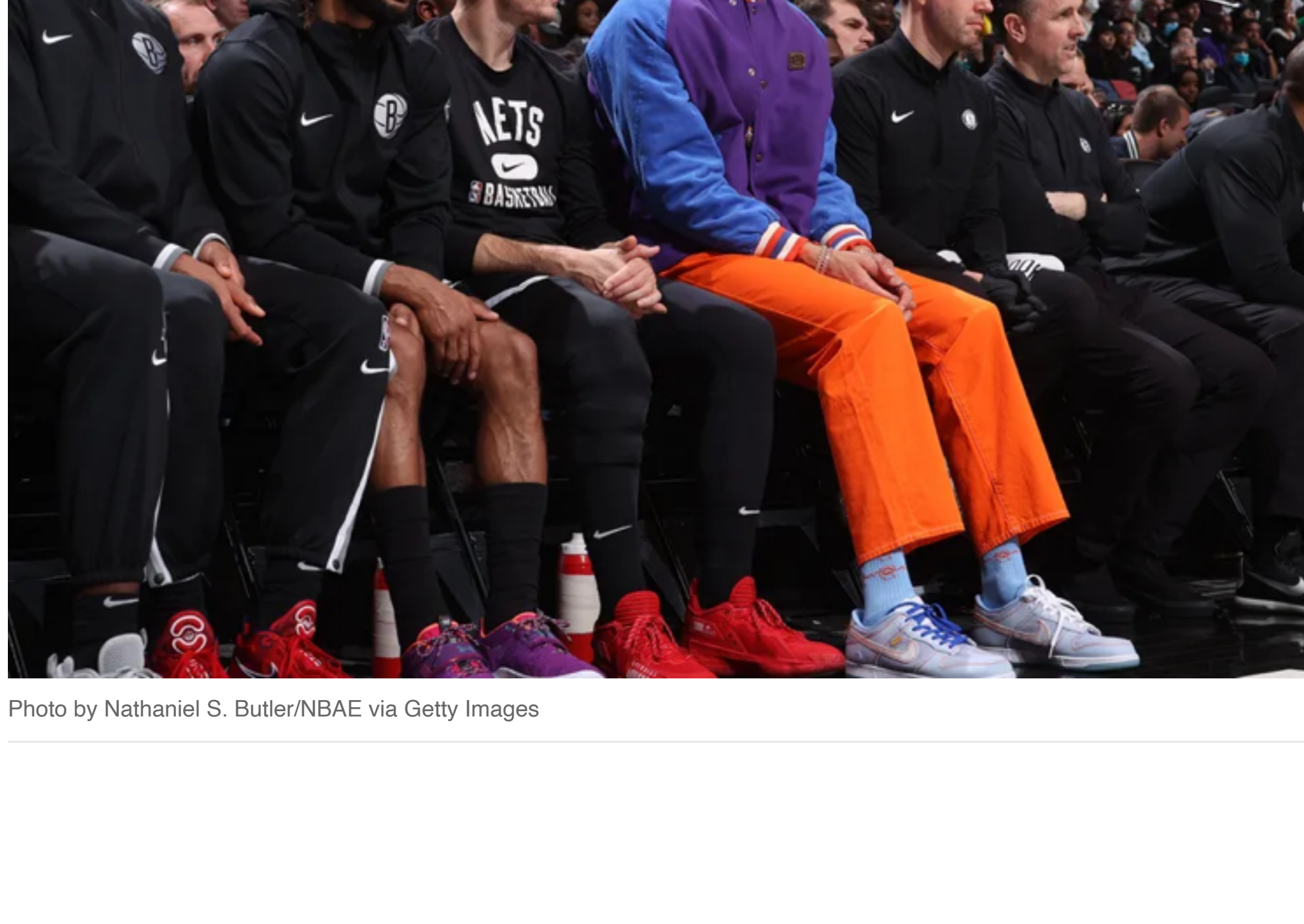


Photo by Nathaniel S. Butler/NBAE via Getty Images

The Nets have announced that Ben Simmons underwent "successful" surgery on his back Thursday morning in Los Angeles. The team also announced that Simmons is expected to "make a full recovery prior to the start of next season's training camp."

Here's the full announcement...

**Brooklyn Nets** guard/forward Ben Simmons underwent successful microdiscectomy surgery today at Cedars-Sinai Marina Del Rey Hospital in Los Angeles. The procedure was performed by Dr. Robert Watkins IV. Following an initial recovery period of approximately three weeks, Simmons will begin a rehabilitation program. He is expected to make a full recovery prior to the start of next season's training camp.

Training camp normally begins the last week in September. That's nearly five months away.

A microdiscectomy relieves the pressure on a spinal nerve root by removing the material causing the pain, per [spine-health.com](#). "During the procedure, a small part of the bone over the nerve root and/or disc material under the nerve root is taken out," the site noted.

Watkins is a top spinal surgeon whose practice has relationships with all of Los Angeles' major pro sports teams. This from his professional profile.

Robert G. Watkins, IV, MD, is a board-certified orthopedic spine surgeon. He specializes in minimally invasive spine surgery, artificial disc replacement, and computer-guided spine surgery. He is the spine consultant for the **L.A. Rams**, **L.A. Dodgers**, **L.A. Lakers**, **L.A. Clippers**, **L.A. Kings**, and **LAFC**. In addition, on a daily basis, teams and agents from all over the country consult him for his opinion of athletic injuries of the spine.

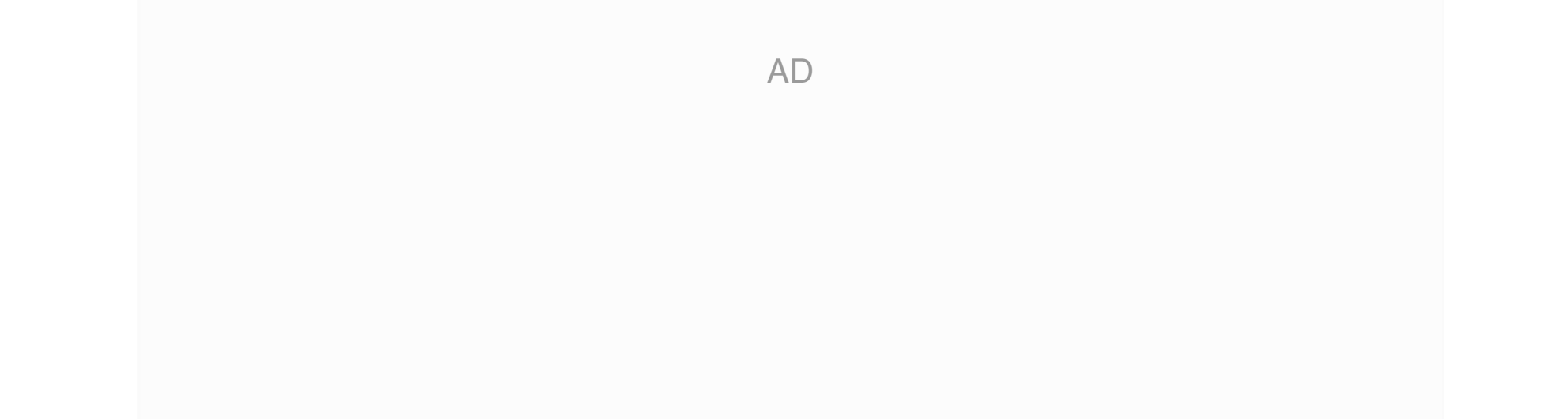
Among the 43 professional basketball players who've been his practice's clients: Steve Nash, Dwight Howard, TJ Ford, Anderson Varejao, Luke Walton, Tracy McGrady and Ryan Anderson. His most recent surgical procedure on an NBA player prior to Simmons came in early December on former Net and current Buck Brook Lopez. Lopez returned to play in early March.

Later Thursday, Simmons posted a thank you to his fans on Instagram...



It's been a frustrating journey for Simmons, the Nets and their fans. There was a lot of hope that Simmons would ramp up and be ready within a few weeks of the Nets' decision to trade for him in early February, but back issues, specifically the herniated disc, have kept him off the court. Now, three months after the trade, Simmons is looking at recovery and rehab.

Here's a chronology of the events beginning with the trade and ending with the announcement that he's undergoing surgery.



**February 10** - Nets acquire Simmons along with Seth Curry and Andre Drummond plus two first rounders and two trade exceptions in return for James Harden and Paul Millsap.

**February 15** - At his introductory press conference in Brooklyn, Simmons tells media, "I don't have a date yet, but I'm working towards getting back on the floor. No date yet, but I'm starting to ramp it up." Simmons says he hopes to be ready for March 10 game vs. **76ers** in Philly. There's no discussion of any back issues.

**February 21** - Ramona Shelburne of ESPN reports "it's going to be more like weeks rather than months" before Simmons gets on the court again, offering a positive lens on Simmons ramp-up, then referred to as "reconditioning."

**February 22** - Marks talks to season ticket holders at a Barclays Center reception about Simmons, offers optimism on how he, Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving can mesh. Marks hopes for quick ramp-up, noting of Simmons and Durant, who was also on the bench at the time, "I'm certainly not going to bet against either one of those guys."

**February 25** - Simmons flies to Milwaukee with team.

**February 26** - Shams Charania reports Simmons has back soreness that requires "further strengthening of the area over a period of time." Nash responds that Simmons has "a little back soreness." That's what's keeping him off the court.

**Late February/Early March** - Simmons gets MRI on his back, apparently related to pain issue. The MRI is not disclosed till March 18.

**March 2** - Brian Windhorst of ESPN says Simmons back issue is worse than reported, quotes Rich Paul, Simmons agent, as telling him that his client is more "week-to-week" than "day-to-day."

**March 3** - Marks tells Michael Grady of YES Network that there's no timetable for Simmons return, but says he's "weeks" away from playing because of "back stiffness," first confirmation that Simmons back is an issue. "Unfortunately, his back stiffness has delayed his ability to get on the court with his teammates. So he's been rehabbing these last sort of week to 10 days," Marks adds.

**March 6** - Adrian Wojnarowski reports Simmons won't play in Philadelphia vs. the 76ers on March 10, his first time back in Philly since he walked out of camp in October. Woj adds that Nets hope Simmons can get back on the court with his teammates in the week after the 76ers game.

**March 10** - Simmons travels with Nets to Philly by bus, sits with team on bench, enduring fan abuse until his teammates blow out Sixers. Reported as a big step in improving his mental health.

**March 12** - Nash says Simmons slowly ramping up as questions continue to rise about his availability.

**March 15 (?)** - Simmons gets epidural to relieve pain in his back which had been radiating into both legs.

**March 16** - Adrian Wojnarowski and Ramona Shelburne report that Simmons has suffered an "irritation" of the L-4 disc of the lower spine but hope remains he can return for a "couple" of regular-season games.

**March 18** - Nash says Simmons had a "flare-up" of his chronic back issues about a month earlier, reveals Simmons had an MRI in early March but won't disclose any details, calling it "old news."

**March 21** - Shams Charania reports and Nash confirms that Simmons has a herniated disc at the L-4 position of his lower back, first confirmation that back issue is more than a "setback," "a little soreness," "stiffness" or a "flare-up," all previously used by Nets to describe Simmons issue. He also dismissed any conversations about Simmons needing surgery, stating, "not by me. I don't think so."

**March 27** - Simmons flies with team to Miami, his first flight since his trip to Milwaukee a month earlier. Grady reports on YES that his back pain is now localized — no longer radiating into his legs — as a result of epidural, rest and rehab. It's the first time anyone has suggested the pain was not limited to his back. Simmons flies to subsequent Nets trips including Boston for playoffs.

**March 30** - Teammates report Simmons is in "good spirits."

**April 1** - Shams Charania reports Simmons has resumed "light on-court work" in Brooklyn.

**April 2** - Nash confirms Shams report of light court work, "He's doing some light shooting. He's been on the court a little bit the past couple of days. Nothing dynamic yet."

**April 2** - Simmons files grievance to get \$19 million in fines back from 76ers.

**April 3** - Woj reports Simmons return in regular season which ends in a week "not realistic."

**April 4** - Shelburne says chance of Simmons playing at all this season is "10 percent. I mean, come on, let's be real."

**April 4** - Nash rules out Simmons for rest of regular season and play-in tournament.

**April 9** - Brian Lewis of Post quotes source close to Simmons as saying he's "a little better," hopes to avoid surgery, first discussion of any off-season procedure, adding to pessimism about a return.

**April 10** - Woj and Shams report Simmons could play in first round, a shocking turnaround from the recent pessimism. Nets release a video from practice the day before which included short clips of Simmons shooting and doing a little bit of movement on the HSS Training Center hardwood. A big milestone on last day of regular season.

**April 10** - Nash, in his first update on Simmons since April 1, discloses Simmons has been doing some "light shooting," and said his rehab is still focused on "1-on-0" activity, but lot of benchmarks must be hit before and return to play can be discussed.

**April 12** - Charania tells Pat McAfee that Simmons could return to play for Brooklyn after Games 1 and 2 in Boston.

**April 13** - Simmons posts social media on Instagram and Twitter, intimating that he's getting better, getting ready to play again.

**April 14** - Kevin Durant says "No, I'm not expecting (Simmons) to play" just as more writers claim his return is imminent. Most prominently Brian Windhorst of ESPN who days earlier had dismissed any possibility of a return even in post-season. Nash says he doesn't know where reports of "imminent" return are coming from.

**April 16** - Woj tweets that Simmons will begin practicing the week of April 18 after two weeks of being pain-free; says it's likely he plays in first round.

**April 18** - Simmons practices 4-on-4 against stay-ready group with team is in Boston, his first practice since arriving in Brooklyn. (Nets would've had him run 5-on-5, but they don't have enough players!)

**April 19** - Nash discloses Simmons first practice, adds Simmons "making progress," but team will monitor effects to see how his back responds over next few days. He also reveals that Simmons did a 0-on-5 walkthrough that afternoon.

**April 20** - Simmons goes through second practice with contact as Woj reports Nets targeting a return on April 25, Game 4, in Brooklyn but says Nets have yet to rule out Game 3 on April 23.

**April 22** - Simmons speaks with the media for first time since his initial press conference saying it's "reasonable" that he'll play Monday. Adds that he doesn't anticipate need for any off-season procedure. "No, I think we're in a good place right now where we're not even thinking about that." Shams later reports that Simmons began to experience back pain for the first time in a month and a planned scrimmage is pushed back.

**April 24** - Simmons tells Nets that he woke with soreness in his back and is declared out for Game 4 of the **Celtics** series, unleashing criticism from fans, pundits, Hall of Fame players.

**April 25** - Nash tells media he did not expect Simmons to play in Game 4, but doesn't rule him out of Game 5 if his back is better. Meanwhile, Simmons and his agent, Rich Paul, meet privately with Sean Marks in Brooklyn to discuss his health. Shams reports that he has a "mental block" that could be triggering his back pain. Stephen A. Smith rants about Simmons being "pathetic." Windhorst says people around Simmons are "exasperated."

**April 27** - Shams, on Pat McAfee Shows, says "at this point, it is all mental with Ben Simmons."

**April 30** - NetsDaily reports on Simmons family issues back home in Australia coincided with his issues at end of 2020-21 season and playoffs.

**May 4** - Nets announced Simmons to undergo a surgical procedure called a microdiscectomy on May 5.

It appears from the chronology that sometime in late February, something happened and Simmons first experienced the back pain that led to the MRI, a diagnosis that he has a herniated L-4 disc in his lower back, the administration of the epidural and finally microdiscectomy surgery.

- **Ben Simmons' back surgery continues sad Nets saga** - Marc Berman - New York Post
- **Ben Simmons has successful back surgery announcement** - Tim Reynolds - AP
- **BEN SIMMONS MEDICAL UPDATE** - Brooklyn Nets

## MORE FROM NETSDAILY

Ime Udoka's success reflecting on Steve Nash, but is the comparison justified?

Liberty come away with impressive road win against the Mystics

Stein: Nets expected to hire Igor Kokoskov as assistant

Kevin Durant and Stephen A. Smith go at it again and again

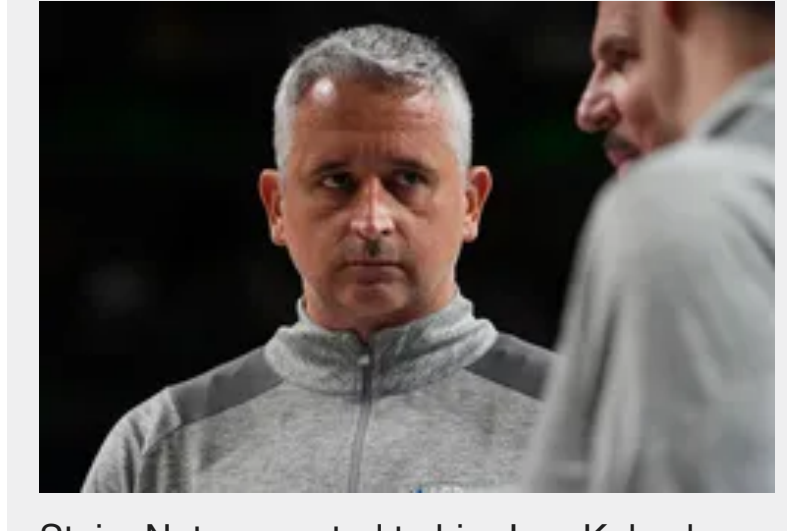
Liberty visit Washington DC to take on the Mystics

The Athletic: Joe Tsai got Liberty from MSG for assumption of debt, promise of revenue split

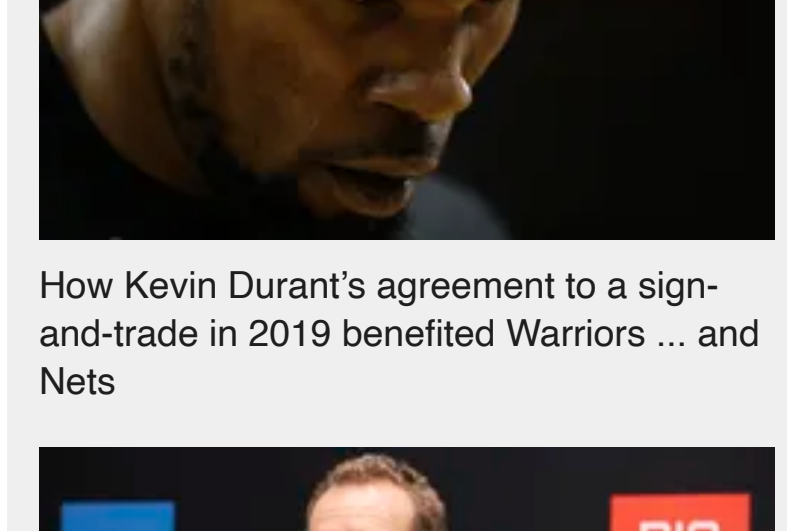
## MOST READ



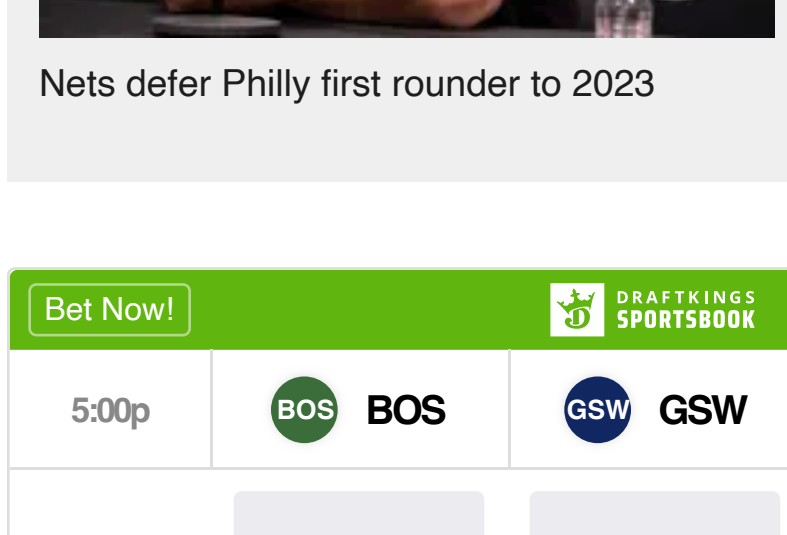
Ime Udoka's success reflecting on Steve Nash, but is the comparison justified?



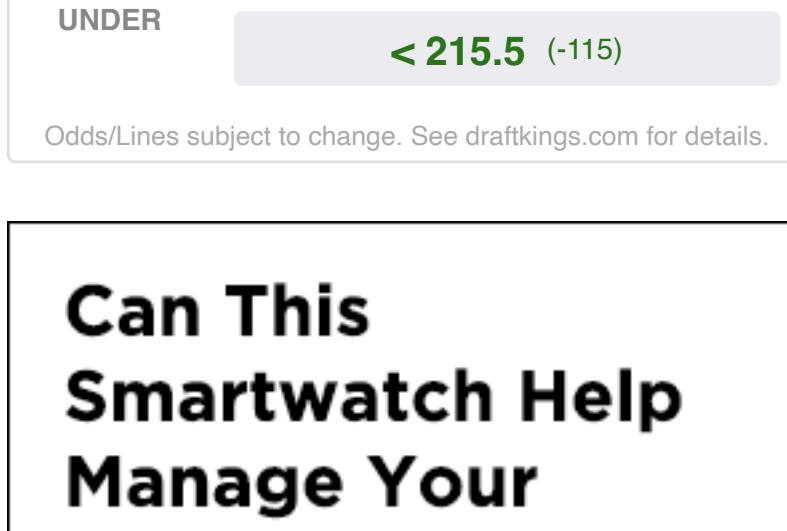
Kevin Durant and Stephen A. Smith go at it again and again



Stein: Nets expected to hire Igor Kokoskov as assistant



How Kevin Durant's agreement to a sign-and-trade in 2019 benefited Warriors ... and Nets



Nets defer Philly first rounder to 2023

**bet Now!** **bet Now!**

500p

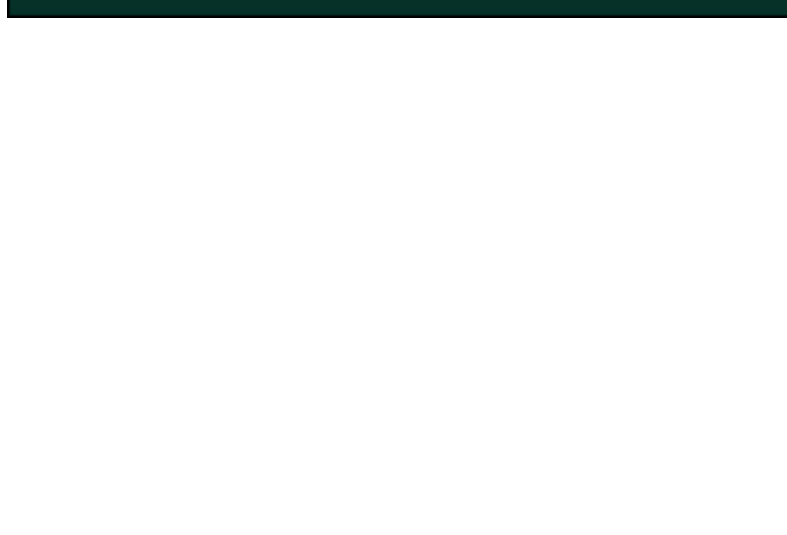
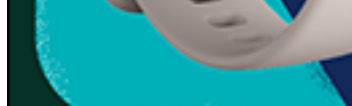
BOS BOS GSW

SPREAD	+4 (-110)	-4 (-110)
MONEY LINE	+155	-180
OVER	> 215.5 (-105)	
UNDER	< 215.5 (-115)	

Odds/Lines subject to change. See DraftKings.com for details.

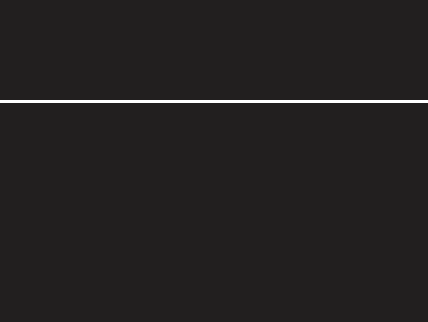
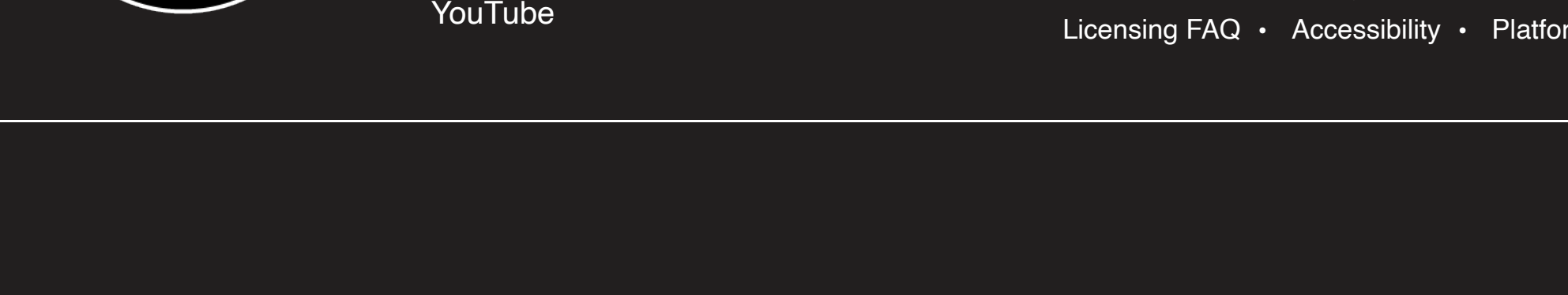
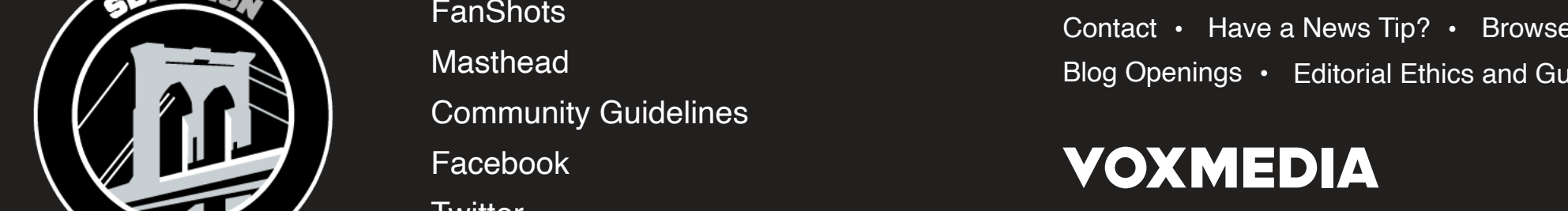
## Can This Smartwatch Help Manage Your Stress?

LEARN MORE ON VOX



## Sponsored Content

- Urologist: Plenty of Men With An Enlarged Prostate Do Not Know About This Simple Solution** GovisBScience.com
- 1 In 2 Mac Users Are Unaware Of This Mac Trick.** MacKeeper
- MD: If You Have Toenail Fungus Do This Immediately (Watch)** Health Tips Journal
- This New Sleep Patch Technology Is Taking The US By Storm** trySleep.com



FanPosts, FanShots, Masthead, Community Guidelines, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube

SBINATION, VOX MEDIA

Contact, Have a News Tip?, Browse Blogs, About SBN, Company Blog, Terms of Use, Privacy Notice, Cookie Policy, Do Not Sell My Personal Info, Licensing FAQ, Accessibility, Platform Status, Advertise with us, Jobs @ Vox Media