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Duncan Rule may hinder Hawks' All-Star chances

By Chris Vivlamore

Tim Duncan is hurting the Hawks – again.

First the Spurs star sank a game-winning shot with 0.4 seconds left to defeat the Hawks earlier this month. Now, indirectly, he may be hurting the Hawks All-Star candidacies.

The NBA released the initial All-Star voting results on Thursday, and the three Hawks on the ballots are not listed among the leaders. Al Horford and Paul Millsap are not in the top 15 in the frontcourt, and Jeff Teague is not in the top 10 in the backcourt of the Eastern Conference.

“I don’t have anything to say about it, honestly,” Horford said Friday before the Hawks hosted the Wizards. “I’m more worried about us winning games and getting this rolling.”

Horford and Millsap may be hurt by the “Duncan Rule.”

In 2012, the NBA changed the voting procedure to eliminate the center position and include the spot with all forwards as a collective frontcourt. Horford made the All-Star Game twice as a center. The Spurs list Duncan as a power forward, although he plays center, and the league made in the change to open a spot for a forward.

The result has been that the frontcourt voting has been dominated by forwards – particularly small forwards. The top three frontcourt vote getters in the initial results are LeBron James, Paul George and Carmelo Anthony.

“Damn Timmy,” joked Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer, the long-time Spurs assistant.

Budenholzer said he was more concerned with his team’s play than All-Star votes.

“I think we feel that they are playing really well and are guys that deserve a lot of recognition for how well they are playing,” Budenholzer said. “If other people aren’t seeing it, I don’t have a lot to say. “There are four or five guys that are going to get most of the fan vote and I’m not sure it’s always based on play.”

**Jenkins back:** The Hawks recalled John Jenkins from their NBA Development League affiliate Friday. The guard was available for Friday’s game after making the cross-country flight after playing for the Bakersfield (Calif.) Jam Thursday.

Jenkins appeared in four games for the Jam, all starts, after being assigned last week. He averaged 21.5 points, 6.3 rebounds and 3.5 assists in 36.3 minutes.

“It was good because, with the (back) injury, I wasn’t able to play big-time minutes,” Jenkins said. “Not having training camp, this was a good run to get my legs back under me. I thought it was really good I went out there and played 30 minutes a game.”

The Hawks will keep rookie Dennis Schroder with the Jam. In his four games, he has averaged 15.3 points, 4.3 rebounds, 7.3 assists and 4.0 turnovers in 33.5 minutes.

“It’s been good for Dennis,” Budenholzer said. “It’s been good for John. If they are in Bakersfield, I can promise you we are watching every move closely and are hoping they continue to grow and develop.”

**Nogueira in L.A.:** Hawks first-round draft pick Lucas Nogueira traveled to Los Angeles to seek other medical opinions on his ailing knees, according to Jose Asensio, the director general of the Spanish League team Asefa Estudiantes Madrid. Nogueira suspended his contract with the team this week to seek additional opinions. The Hawks said they are aware and will continue to monitor the situation.

**Ayon out:** Gustavo Ayon missed his second straight game with a left ankle sprain and left leg contusion. The forward/center will travel to New York for Saturday’s game against the Knicks, but is unlikely to play.