

Boston celtics and
the historic 2008
season: how several
trades changed the
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When we look back towards 2007, The Boston Celtics was one of the worst teams in all of NBA history with an appalling 24-58 record, winning approximately twenty nine percent of their games. After hearing this, I bet you would think it would be crazy if I said that in a year they would win the title but that was exactly what they did. Before they acquired basketball legends Ray Allen and Kevin Garnett in a pair of megahit trades, the Boston Celtics had gone twenty-one years without even one single appearance in The Finals. To put that into perspective, their last appearance was back in 1986 when they were led by future hall of famers: Larry Bird, Kevin McHale and Robert Parish. Coming off a horrendous overall season that previous year, Celtics president and former Boston Celtics basketball player Danny Ainge was determined to change the franchise's fortunes almost overnight with two trades that no one had seen coming.

Ainge instantly turned his eyes toward the Seattle SuperSonics (now the Oklahoma City Thunder) All-Star guard Ray Allen, who averaged over twenty-six points per game in the prior season. Now for those of you that don't know who Ray Allen is at all, here's a little refresher. According to Basketball Reference, Ray Allen was originally drafted to the Minnesota Timberwolves with the 5th pick of the 1996 NBA Draft. Throughout his career at that point he had hopped from several teams such as the Milwaukee Bucks and Miami Heat, and no matter where he went he was averaging an absurd twenty plus points a night with a three-point field goal percentage of around forty percent. In mid-2007 on that year's draft night, the Celtics and the SuperSonics agreed to a trade that would send the All-star guard Ray Allen to Boston in exchange for the Boston Celtics number five pick of that year's

draft, aka Jeff Green, along with other trade considerations such as cash. This acquisition would basically add more offensive power to a Celtics team who struggled to put up points that whole season except for future Hall of Famer Paul Pierce who single handedly ran the offense.

Now after hearing about Ray Allen acquisition, most people would see that offensively we would receive a boost, but we still lacked defensively especially in the statistical category of rebounding and defending. That is when Danny Ainge would set his site on one of the best defense players our league has ever seen, Kevin Garnett. According to ESPN, Kevin Garnett was drafted straight out of high school with the fifth overall pick in the 1995 draft to the Minnesota Timberwolves. From the start of his career to the 2007 season, Kevin consistently averaged around twenty points per game, ten rebounds along with two blocks per game. These impressive stat lines he left on the court would earn him several Defensive Player of the Year awards and also many All-Star game nods. During the 2007 season, All-star Kevin Garnett, had blocked any sort of trade to the Boston Celtics, he would threaten the organization that he would option out of his contract the next season if they even tried to attempt to acquire him.

However, once Ray Allen was added to the roster, Garnett eventually stopped from preventing the trade and decided to finally give the city of Boston a chance. This would lead to one of largest single sided trades for one individual player in NBA history. The deal that finally landed Kevin Garnett in Boston included the Celtics sending current players Al Jefferson, Ryan Gomes, Theo Ratliff, Gerald Green, Sebastian Telfair along with two first-round picks and money to the Timberwolves for Kevin Garnett alone. It was a <https://assignbuster.com/boston-celtics-and-the-historic-2008-season-how-several-trades-changed-the-franchise/>

massive blockbuster trade for a recently turned 31-year-old power forward who many analysts thought his best years were starting to be coming to an end. This however would not be the case as he would go on to produce some of the best numbers of his lengthy and hall of fame worthy career.

Established veterans Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen have now joined with the Celtics sole All-Star forward in Paul Pierce to form the Boston's new "Big Three", a term that hasn't been heard since Larry Bird, Kevin McHale and Robert Parish lead the Celtics to several title runs throughout the 1980s, including a consecutive seven-time championship year runs. Together, that new "Big Three" would lead the franchise to one of the greatest single-season turnarounds the National Basketball Association has ever seen. From a meager twenty-four wins to an astonishing sixty-six-win season, the Celtics 42-game turnaround was simply breathtaking and almost too good to be true. That year, the Celtics sold out almost every home game and the basketball atmosphere throughout the city was as it had been since the years when Boston won seven straight titles. Boston would finish that season with the NBA's best record going 66-16 overall, the Big Three of Paul Pierce, Kevin Garnett, and Ray Allen were all named All-Stars, and Kevin Garnett would go on to win another Defensive Player of the Year award, and finally Danny Ainge would be named the Executive of the Year. Regardless how great their season was the Big Three would still have many tests to face once they reached the Playoffs.

In the first-round, the Boston Celtics would be put against the Atlanta Hawks who were lead by Joe Johnson, Josh Smith, Mike Bibby and future Boston Celtics Al Horford. The Atlanta Hawks that year were a disappointing 36-4, <https://assignbuster.com/boston-celtics-and-the-historic-2008-season-how-several-trades-changed-the-franchise/>

and no one would have thought they would give Boston a run for their money. The teams would go back and forth in the series before Boston would eventually win a blowout game 7 by a score of 99-65 with Paul Pierce leading the way with twenty-two points. The next series would' t be any much better as the Celtics were set to face the man who many believe as the greatest basketball player of all time, Lebron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Once again, this series would go the distance as well until the Celtics finally put them away in a nail biting Game 7 with a score of 97-92, which was once again led by team captain Paul Pierce who put up a dominating performance with forty one points. After battling it out through two hard fought series, the Boston Celtics were finally facing the Detroit Pistons in the Eastern Conference Finals who were led by Chauncey Billups and Rasheed Wallace. Once again in familiar territory, the Boston Celtics would go onto handle the Pistons in Game 6 by a score of 89-81 which saw each member of the Big Three put up more than 15 points that game. This victory would see the Boston Celtics advancing to The Finals where they would face off against long-time rivals, the Los Angeles Lakers who were led by another player considered as one of the greatest of all time, Kobe Bryant. It was the first time the two teams had met in the NBA Finals since there outrageous postseason rivalries between Hall of Famers Magic Johnson and Larry Bird.

After five grueling games which saw both teams battling back in forth, the Celtics would win Game 5 by a score of 103-98 and held on to a 3-2 lead on their return to Boston to finally bring the championship home. In Game 6, the Boston Celtics would finally bring the coveted Larry O Brian Trophy home by a score of 131-92 which saw the Celtics all-stars shine as Paul Pierce scored <https://assignbuster.com/boston-celtics-and-the-historic-2008-season-how-several-trades-changed-the-franchise/>

seventeen points and KG plus Ray Allen both scored twenty-six points. This would mark the team's twenty-sixth postseason game of the season, the latest record for the most games ever played in a single postseason by one single team ever. With Boston claiming it's NBA-leading 17th championship, it seemed that their fairy tale story had finally reached its happy ending with Danny Ainge making two trades that shaped the franchise forever.