

Former Buckeye Bates-Diop Inks \$5 Million Deal With Suns



Former Ohio State forward Keita Bates-Diop has found a new home in the NBA, signing a two-year, \$5 million deal with the Phoenix Suns, according to ESPN Senior NBA Insider Adrian Wojnarowski. The deal includes a player option.

Free agent F Keita Bates-Diop has agreed to a two-year, \$5M deal with the Phoenix Suns, co-head of @CAA_Basketball Austin Brown tells ESPN. Deal includes a player option. Bates-Diop will have a chance to earn a starting forward spot.

— Adrian Wojnarowski (@wojespn) June 30, 2023

Bates-Diop, who will now play for his fourth NBA franchise in six seasons, is coming off a career year with the San Antonio Spurs.

Playing alongside former Ohio State forward Malaki Branham, the 27-year-old made 42 starts and recorded a career-high 9.7 points and 1.5 assists per game while shooting just under 51 percent from the field. The 2022-23 campaign capped off a successful three-year stint with San Antonio where he appeared in 156 games.

Besides a seven-game stint with the Denver Nuggets in 2020, Bates-Diop spent his first two seasons with the Minnesota Timberwolves, who selected the Ohio State forward with the No. 48 overall pick in the 2018 NBA Draft.

There, he appeared in 67 games and netted 5.9 points and 2.3 rebounds per game off the bench.

As a Buckeye, Bates-Diop had a distinguished four-year career. Starting in 70 games from 2014-2018, the Normal, Illinois native combined to average 11.7 points, 5.7 rebounds and 1.1 assists per contest.

Bates-Diop emerged as one of the nation's top players in his final season with Ohio State. Producing 19.8 points and 8.7 rebounds and 1.6 blocks per game, the Normal, Illinois native was named a consensus All-American and Big Ten Player of the Year.

Now, the former Buckeye will look to earn a starting role on a Phoenix Suns roster filled with All-NBA-caliber players such as Kevin Durant, Devin Booker and Bradley Beal.