



PAGES 6-15 (4 minimum) of updated/newfound notes as of May 3, 2021 (DEN v. LAL)

A CRUSHING INJURY

In the waning minutes of the April 12 matchup versus the Golden State Warriors, Nuggets guard leader Jamal Murray went down with a torn ACL — an injury that will surely sideline him for the remainder of the season, and perhaps some of next season. Since then, the Nuggets locked into filling that void — going 8-2 against opponents since. Their only loss since the injury came to the Golden State on April 23.

MPJ STEPS UP

In what has been an already scorching hot month of April for the Nuggets forward, Michael Porter Jr. has further cemented his status as a rising star since the absence of Jamal Murray. In games since the injury, Porter has surpassed his 18.5 PPG average in all but one contest. On April 24th, he erupted for a career high 39 points on 13-21 shooting. In April alone, Porter has vastly exceeded his season averages, compiling a 23.6 PPG and 7.7 RPG line on 34.8 minutes per game (also a career high for a month).

JOKIC UPDATE

April hasn't seen much change in Nikola Jokic's dominant, MVP-caliber season — he's amassed a 24.1 point, 10.5 rebound, 9.4 assist statline for the month (including a huge 47 point game in an overtime win versus Memphis on April 19). What's odd, however, is his (very slight) dip in minutes per game — he's averaged 35+ minutes in every month this year besides April (33.6 minutes).

WIDENING THE GAP

Don't buy into recency bias and hype — Nikola Jokic is still the NBA's MVP frontrunner (according to NBA.com MVP ladder). What already felt like a done deal has further cemented itself — the Nuggets have the western conference's best record in April — climbing to the third seed in the west.

NO COMPARISON

Nikola Jokic's numbers versus opposing centers is nothing short of ridiculous: since March 26th, Jokic has outscored his opponents starting center in 19 of 20 total games — the only player to score more was Bam Adebayo, who scored 21 against Jokic's 17 points on April 14. He's averaging an astounding 14.1 more points per game versus centers during this stretch.

DATE/OPP	JOKIC PTS	OPP CENTER	PTS
3/26 — NO	37	S. Adams	8
3/28 — ATL	16	C. Capela	10

3/30 — PHI	21	D. Howard	10
4/1 — LAC	14	I. Zubac	8
4/4 — ORL	17	W. Carter Jr.	16
4/6 — DET	27	M. Plumlee	4
4/7 — SAS	25	J. Poeltl	4
4/9 — SAS	26	J. Poeltl	13
4/11 — BOS	17	R. Williams	10
4/12 — GSW	27	K. Looney	0
4/14 — MIA	17	B. Adebayo	21
4/16 — HOU	29	K. Olynyk	23
4/19 — MEM	47	X. Tillman	18
4/21 — POR	25	J. Nurkic	8
4/23 — GSW	19	K. Looney	2
4/24 — HOU	24	K. Olynyk	21
4/26 — MEM	24	J. Valanciunas	13
4/28 — NO	32	S. Adams	2
4/29 — TOR	19	P. Siakam	11

(cont).

4/1 — LAC	30	I. Zubac	6
4/3 — LAL	32	A. Drummond	4
	AVG: 25		AVG: 10.9

FACUNDO GETS HANDS DIRTY

Perhaps no Nuggets role player has garnered as much cult popularity as Facundo Campazzo — an Argentinian point guard who makes the most of his 21 minutes per game. Most impressive of all is his steals per game — which, when adjusted to PER 36, is tied for 6th highest in the entire NBA.

PLAYER	STEALS PER 36
M. Thybulle	2.8
T.J. McConnell	2.5
J. Butler	2.2
R. Rubio	2.1
K. Bazemore	2
D. Wright	2

S. Johnson	1.9
J. Vanderbilt	1.9
F. Campazzo	1.9

EFFICIENT AARON

Here's an interesting one: despite a slight drop in most major statistics, Nuggets newcomer Aaron Gordon has seen career highs in percentages — besides 3PT% — across all statistics. His FG% is 50.9%, his 2P% is 61.8%, and his eFG% is an impressive 55.5%. This could possibly be attributed to having astounding facilitators, but it could also be due to his shot selection — he's taking less three-pointers (2.7 per game) and two-pointers (5.5 per game) on practically the same amount of minutes as his seasons in Orlando.

Aaron Gordon	FG%	eFG%	2P%
16-17 (ORL)	0.454	0.499	0.528
17-18 (ORL)	0.434	0.5	0.497
18-19 (ORL)	0.449	0.507	0.499
19-20 (ORL)	0.437	0.484	0.494
20-21 (TOTAL)	0.463	0.525	0.529
20-21 (ORL)	0.437	0.509	0.475
20-21 (DEN)	0.509	0.555	0.618

DEFENSIVE MYTHS

Despite what some analysts may tell you, the Nuggets have had a rock solid season on the side of the ball that doesn't get much shine in Denver. Their defensive rating (a culmination of all statistics) has jumped from 18th to 12th in one season. Among their best stats is rebounding — the Nuggets allow the least rebounds to opposing teams in the NBA. Accordingly, they grab the most defensive rebounds in the league, and, furthermore, allow the eighth least points per game. Not bad for a bunch of "offensive" players.

GIVING AND TAKING DIMES

Amongst all team statistics, the craziest disparity is the Nuggets assists per game, versus their assists allowed per game. Denver unsurprisingly is second best in the NBA in dishing out dimes — led by Nikola Jokic (8.5 APG, good for sixth best) — but their assists allowed is the fourth worst in professional basketball.

NOT AFRAID TO SHOOT

The title of this point must be tattooed somewhere on Will Barton's body — the man is not known for hesitation. Barton has earned his role as a starter in Denver over the course of the past couple seasons, and this year is no different: out of 56 possible contests, Barton has featured as the teams two-guard in 52 games. In those contests, he's averaged 31 minutes per game. Of players currently healthy and available, Will Barton ranks third in attempts per game (10.9), second in three pointers attempted (4.6) and third in two pointers attempted (6.3). Across all of these stats, however, is a harsh truth — the man isn't as efficient as he needs to be. All Nuggets starters rank eighth or higher in FG%. Barton? He ranks fifteenth.

"MOTOR" PORTER JR

MPJ doesn't need rest. In fact, his best scoring games throughout the season come in games where he's had zero days or one day of rest. In back-to-backs (zero days) Porter is averaging a whopping 21.5 points per game. In every other game (one day) Porter is averaging 18.6 points per game. Now, let's look at how that stacks up to two day and three day rest periods for the young star (hint: play AS MANY games as possible in a short period of time and this kid shines).

Days rest	PPG	RPG	FG%	3P%	FGA	FGM
0	21.5	8.3	0.549	0.523	14.4	7.9
1	18.6	7.4	0.545	0.424	13.3	7.2
2	18.3	9.3	0.526	0.474	12.7	6.7
3+	15	5.8	0.511	0.316	11.3	5.8

IMPRESSIVE MPJ STATS

There are a number of wildly impressive stats that the Nuggets newest star has compiled during his steady rise this season. For starters, let's talk about shooting splits versus teams — MPJ has shot an average of 50 percent or better(!) versus EVERY team in basketball but five: Golden State, Toronto, Milwaukee, Los Angeles and Boston. From deep, MPJ has posted a 50 percent or better average versus eleven teams across all contests. These stats culminate to one final scoring number — of all the teams in professional basketball, MPJ averages double-digit scoring against every single team but one: the Milwaukee Bucks. In two contests versus Giannis and company, Porter just missed the mark at 9.5 points per game.

CHARITY STRIPE

Gearing more towards a single game accomplishment — the Nuggets did their best work from the free-throw line this season against the Clippers, just a few days ago. In their May 1 matchup, the Nuggets posted a season high for FT% (95.2 percent) on twenty-one attempts (one miss). Twenty-one attempts was good enough for the eleventh most all season, and of the ten games with more, only one game eclipsed the 90% or better mark (April 9 vs. SAS — 91.2% on 23 attempts).

JOKIC VERSUS THE "NO CALL"

It's been well documented that Nikola Jokic doesn't receive as many foul calls as other big names in the NBA — the criticism is warranted. Of the twenty-five HIGHEST scorers in the NBA, Jokic ranks LAST in free throws attempted, as well as fourth-to-last in free throws made. His MVP competitor down low, Joel Embiid, is first place in both categories (he nearly doubles both statistics). Let's get hypothetical... if Jokic shot 86% (current FT%) on eleven free throws per game (Embiid's average FTA)... his points per game would jump up just over five points... making him a 31.3 PPG player and a tenth-of-a-point shy of Stephen Curry's season leading 31.4 PPG.

MVP